Dungeon®

ADVENTURES FOR TSR ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

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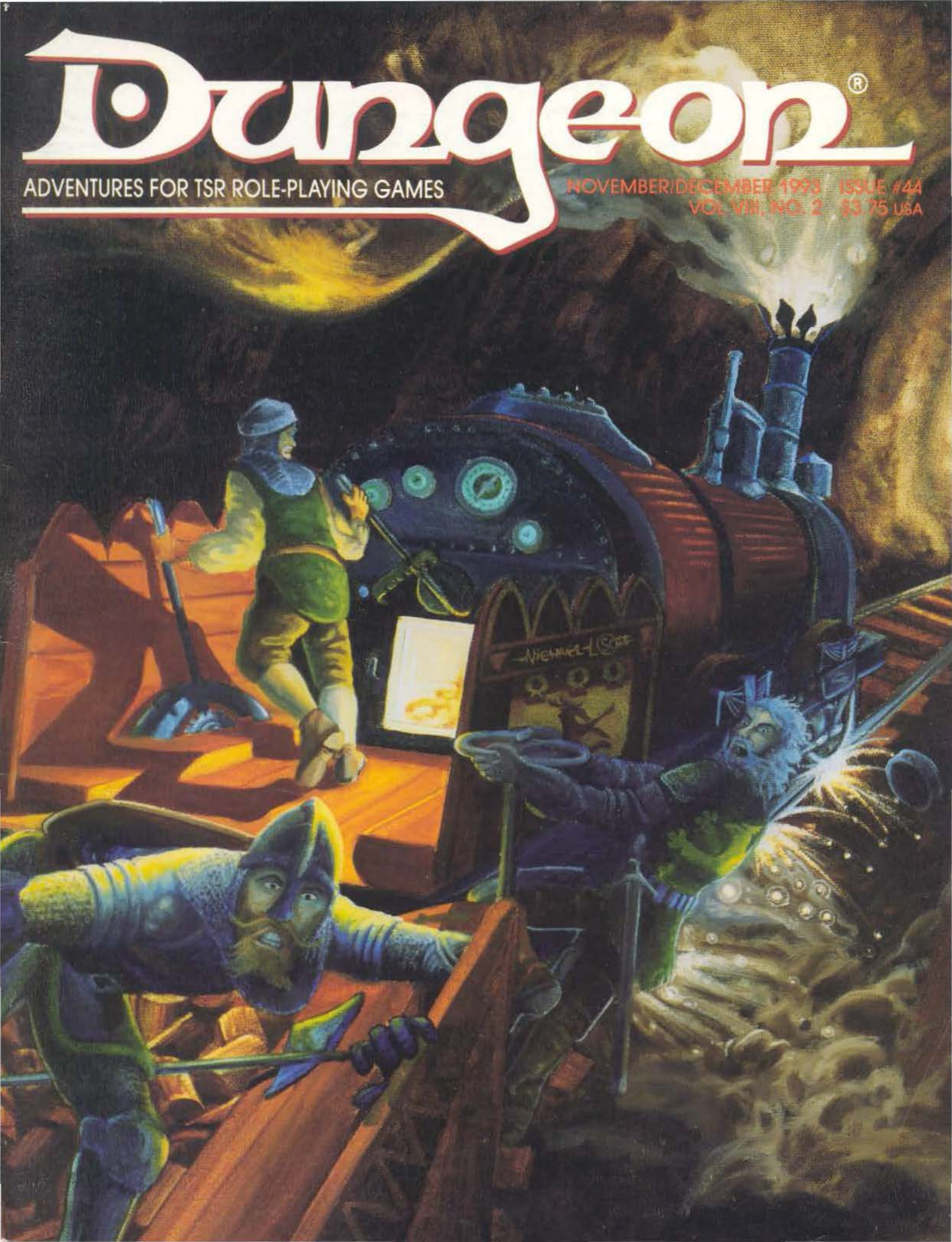

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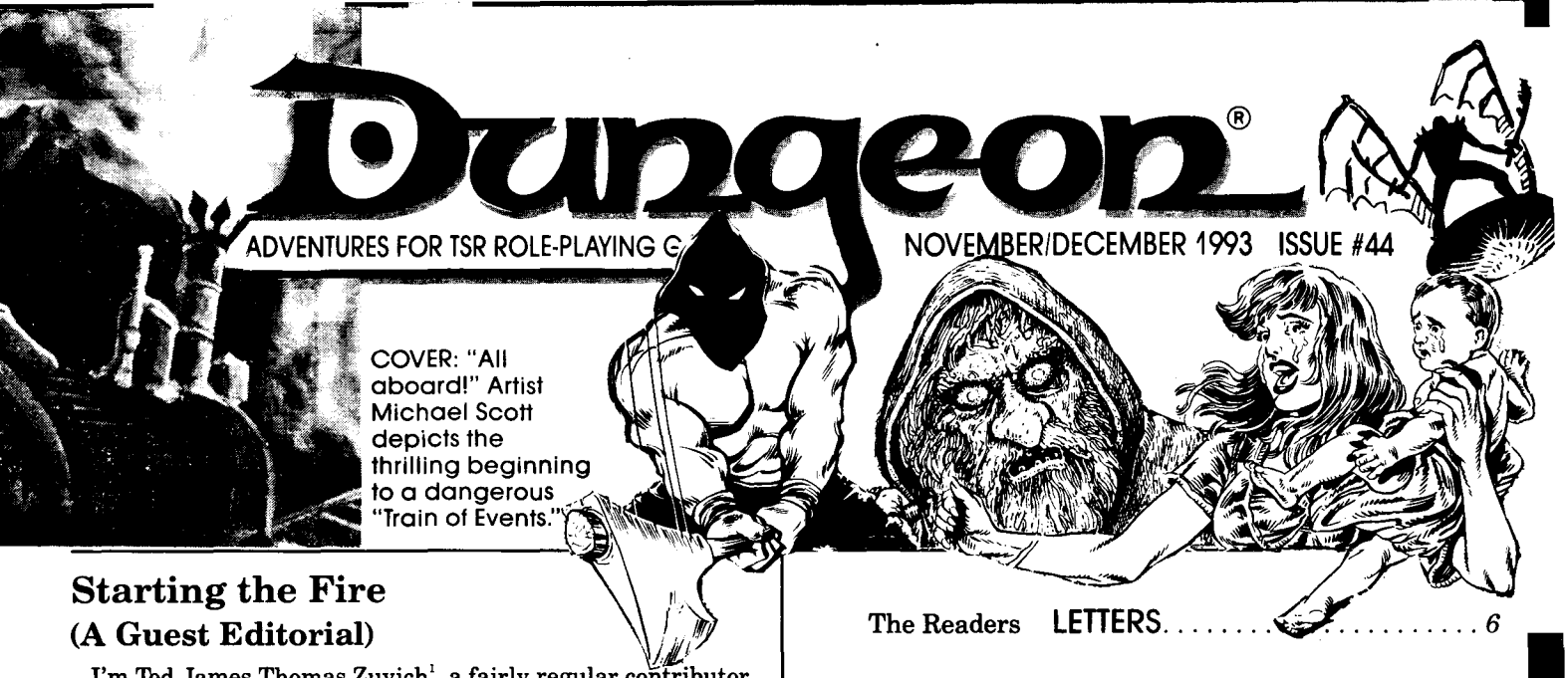

COVER: "All aboard!" Artist Michael Scott depicts the thrilling beginning to a dangerous "Train of Events."

Starting the Fire
(A Guest Editorial)

I'm Ted James Thomas Zuvich[1], a fairly regular contributor to DUNGEON® Adventures. My published adventures include "Courier Service" (issue #27), "The Siege of Kratys Freehold" (issue #33), and "Old Man Katan" (issue #41). Barbara asked me to write this because she thought you might be interested in what I went through to get my latest adventure published.

I first submitted a proposal for "A Hot Day in L'Trel" in September 1987, under the unremarkable title of "Fire!" Barbara requested a copy of the completed manuscript. I panicked. I didn't have a completed version of the manuscript, but I hurriedly typed one up, scratched together a map, and sent the package in. A month later, I got back a manuscript covered in red ink, and a long letter containing a list of suggested revisions.

That first letter was the beginning of a long series of revisions. How many rewrites, exactly? I'm not sure. I did at least two rewrites every year, from 1987 to 1993—at least six that I sent in. I playtested more than ten versions, and "L'Trel" was even part of an informal tournament at one point.

Why bother? Mainly because I really liked the idea behind "L'Trel." The adventure was just too ambitious for a totally inexperienced writer to pull off. Secondly, I never *quite* got a full rejection. Barbara never sent me a letter saying, "I never want to see this again." Once, however, she suggested I put "L'Trel" aside for a while and focus my energy on something else.[2] So I did, and it worked. After I'd sold two modules, I asked Barbara if she wanted to see "L'Trel" again. She did.[3] I sold two more adventures before "L'Trel" was finally accepted in late 1992, making it the longest-gestating module published in DUNGEON Adventures (so far).

Persist.[4] If your first idea doesn't work out, try another one. Sooner or later, your fire will start.

Ted James Thomas Zuvich

[1]At first we thought Ted was two people: Ted James and Thomas Zuvich. Later, we realized he is triplets.

[2]That *was* a full rejection.

[3]What else could I do? By that time, Ted was like family.

[4]Well, maybe not as hard as Ted did. I'm not sure I could go through this again.

Vol. VIII, No. 2

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Fire is the best of servants; but what a master!
Thomas Carlyle

LETTERS

Please let us know what you think about this issue of DUNGEON® Adventures. Although we can't print every letter we receive, we read them all and seriously consider your comments and suggestions. Write to: Letters, DUNGEON Adventures, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147 USA.

All Over the Realms

I'm 16 years old, and I've been a DM for four years now. I've never had any trouble keeping my players occupied, thanks to DUNGEON Magazine.

I usually use the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting. If there's a module too hard to convert into this setting I don't mind, because I can always get ideas from it. By the way, please print more RAVENLOFT® modules.

In issue #39 you wrote that you would like to know how adventures have been strung together, and here's an example. The party was in Featherdale in the FORGOTTEN REALMS, and there they experienced "A Local Legend" (issue #31). After having completed the adventure, Marcella asked the party to bring some herbs to a friend in Highmoon. On the way to Highmoon, the party met a relative of a gnome in the party, who said that the character's family in the northern part of the Thunder Peaks had a problem. The group delivered the herbs in Highmoon and hurried to the Thunder Peaks. The group crossed through the woods, where I used "Euphoria Horrors" (issue #34) and "Deadfalls on Nightwood Trail" (issue #26). When the group got to the gnome's family, I used "Whitelake Mine" (issue #18). Afterwards, the party got a job as "Caravan Guards" (issue #26).

Allan Ulrich Bjornsholm Andersen
Nastved, Denmark

Pesties Forever!

I hadn't DMed in a few years, and DUNGEON modules have helped me turn a partial campaign story line into what is becoming an epic quest. My player's mixed-level party started with "Old-Man Katan and the Incredible, Edible, Dancing Mushroom Band" (issue #41). One low-level evoker has taken a liking to the campestris (or "pesties," as the party calls them) and now carries three around with him. He sings to them and teaches them new songs, which backfires a lot.

After helping Katan in the swamp, the party wandered through some strange towers (part of "Secrets of the Towers," issue #10). They found an enormous amount of treasure in one and promptly went to the nearest town to get a wagon train to haul the goodies off in. In town, they participated in "A Wrastle with Bertrum" (issue #30). The party came out with an extra member (a female ranger) and somehow convinced themselves that despite saving the "gold," they would be arrested if they stayed in town.

After leaving town, they found "The Well of Lord Barcus" (issue #41) and heard "Their Master's Voice" (issue #37). Knowing something of caravans, the party jumped at the chance to earn some money as "Caravan Guards" (issue #26). This was the most deadly encounter, resulting in one PC *polymorphed* into a campestri, one fighter dead, multiple PCs with hit points in single digits, and the bard going on to his destiny as an avatar of death, the usual way.

Previously, one of the PCs had received property and a castle through "The Inheritance" (issue #26). The PC recruited all his friends (including Bob, the campestri) to help him clean out his keep. They're now in the process of finding out just how many hobgoblins are in the keep and the surrounding forest.

On another subject, I've used some physical props as a DM and seen some as a player. I try to make authentic-looking maps and use distinct voices for the NPCs. Beyond that, I use photos, drawings, and models to show the PCs what they see. I also have a collection of inexpensive uncut gemstones. They're dirty, rough, and look like rocks. This is what nonhumans carry for treasure in my campaign world. The PC party found a 200-gp ruby in "The Well of Lord Barcus," so I handed them an uncut ruby the size of a pigeon's egg.

"It's a rock," they said, and sold it for a few silver pieces in town. But this is part of the spirit of the game: Should their characters be able to recognize valuable uncut gems by sight? Cut gems are different, and I have some for the same purpose.

My other props include deer horn, feathers, leather bags to use for holding coinage, the *deck of many things,* and my own dagger and sword for the thief's magic dagger and the (dead) bard's magic sword, which stayed behind when he reached avatarhood.

What have all these things gotten me?
—A group of players who can't wait until the next game session.
—A party that actually role-plays, right down to the courtship of NPCs and grief over fallen comrades.
—A player who actually role-plays a campestri, with feeling. (The other PCs are working on changing him back.)
—Female players who never knew the game was this much fun, because they're used to seeing nearly naked

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women on RPG products (TSR included), and who concluded long ago that the game was too sexist for their tastes (but that's a topic for another letter).

So keep up the good work, DUNGEON staff. One of these days I may submit a module myself. You have been warned.

Grace A. Mixon
Melbourne Village, Florida

Strange Glue

Linking several short adventures together is really a good idea. Sometimes you have to make alterations so the plot runs through the whole series, but it's worth the time and effort.

Just now, I'm linking several short adventures, starting with "A Way With Words" (issue #41). I replaced the kobolds with hobgoblins and made sure the book was already gone again by the time the party meets some of the hobgoblins in their camp. These hobgoblins have learned some of the "magic" poetry by heart. The party then follows the track of the thieves through four more adventures: one of my own plus "The Well of Lord Barcus" (issue #41), "Old Man Katan" (issue #41), and "Song of the Fens" (issue #40). The story ends with "Legerdemain" (issue #39), where the book shows up in the hands of the hobgoblin Guan-yu, who uses it in a nasty, clever scheme to make sure the gnome Torlharlanninen will be accused of all the little accidents that Guan-yu's imp is causing. Finally, after the villain Rhune is arrested, he will use his powerful, corrupt friends to have one of the adventurers (the one with whom Tivity falls in love) thrown into "Granite Mountain Prison" (issue #36).

Those who don't mind changing a lot in someone else's adventure could even incorporate "Song of the Fens" into "Old Man Katan" by making Katan the father of Martinique, using his cabin as the setting, and choosing one of the other inhabitants of the swamp (or a member of the party) as her future husband. Both adventures mention undead creatures (although they have different origins); for stronger parties, stronger undead could be selected.

So long as good modules will be printed, you can go on endlessly "gluing" adventures together.

Rona Kreekel
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

The Map and the Meteor

In my current campaign, the player characters first met at Crellar's Trading Post following the completion of "Night of Fear" (issue #28). There, they were contacted by couriers from the town of Bordton and traveled there to investigate a murder in "Mightier Than the Sword" (issue #29).

From there, the adventurers proceeded overland, having "A Wrastle With Bertrum" (issue #30) before embarking on an investigation of the evil mage Thaddigren Dentiata "In the Dread of Night" (issue #24). In the course of that scenario, they obtained "The Moor-Tomb Map" (issue #13).

Returning from a successful venture against the evil mage, they were hired to gather red fungus for the alchemist Randal from "The Dark Forest" (issue #22). On their way to this subterranean escapade, they happened upon "The Assault on Eddistone Point" (issue #1), which they bungled badly, burning the tower to the ground while allowing the illusionist to escape.

After gathering the fungus and defeating the flinds, the party headed for home, becoming sidetracked by "The Song of the Fens" (issue #40) and avoiding the authorities who were after them for burning down the Eddistone Point tower.

Heading south, they investigated the aforementioned map, recovering the loot from the tomb of Dalvan Meir. Proceeding farther south, they were scared silly by the "Troll Bridge" (issue #36) and refreshed by "The Well of Lord Barcus" (issue #41). Arriving at a large port city, they were immediately hired by the astronomer Thrull Arksum to recover the meteor from "Horror's Harvest" (issue #38).

If the PCs emerge alive from that, they party may act on rumors that point toward "The Serpent's Tooth" (issue #19), "Old Sea-Dog" (issue #23), "...And a Dozen Eggs" (issue #30).

Tony Ross
Portland, Oregon

Stay With the Story

Like most readers of your magazine, I have never found sufficient reason to write. Several letters in issue #41, however, prompted such a strong reaction that I thought now would be a good time to take keyboard in hand.

I must take issue with Adam C. Chunn, who believes that more "plotless" adventures are needed. With almost twice his twelve years of dungeon mastering, I find every story line adventure a challenge to weave into an already complicated campaign. The details help add to the excitement and suspense that separate *adventures* from common occurrences. In addition, I find it is much easier to teach new DMs the essence of the game by discussing these plot-intensive modules. I, for one, appreciate the hard work and extra effort the authors pump into these adventures. Fantasy role-playing has come a long way from those original mimeographed rules with which some of us started. For those DMs who have a hard time with plots, I suggest rolling random adventures.

Secondly, I applaud Alex Vazquez's comments to DMs about "teaching ideals" and "encouraging players to think and grow." Fantasy role-playing gets enough bad press. I am greatly surprised that you didn't add your own editorial "Amen" as a response.

Richard Marchal
Marion, Illinois

The Real Treasure

I'd like to respond to Adam Chunn's letter in issue #41. I've been playing D&D® and AD&D® games off an on for 14 years, and I understand Adam's attachment to the nostalgic. I remember playing through some of the great (old) modules like *Palace of the Silver Princess, Castle Amber,* and the *Against the Giants* series. In fact, some of my best-remembered gaming experiences were sparked by those modules. However, I was in junior high school then, and my brother—the DM—was in high school. We had all the time in the world to play, especially during the summer when we did practically nothing else.

Re-reading those modules now, I still admit they were good, but I also understand that my DM had to add a great deal of plot and campaign-specific details to flesh out the adventures. As I've grown older, my gaming time has decreased tremendously. Work, bills, and family require more of my time than high school ever did, or college for that matter. And if I'm going to run a module, I'd prefer the adventure be a well-plotted story requiring little or no

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A HOT DAY IN L'TREL

BY TED JAMES THOMAS ZUVICH

Only you can prevent firestorms.

Artwork by David Day

Ted writes: "In 1983, when I was a volunteer fireman, our captain gave us a lecture on the department's 'disaster response' plans. One of the scenarios was 'what would happen if one of those BIG gasoline storage tanks ever blew?' That lecture sparked off a few thoughts.

"I've probably had more than 100 people play this scenario over the years. Some players did better than others, but I give my thanks to every one of them. Especially Elroy, whose mage PC never quite got over the stigma of being Kaustos Talbot's nephew, and the Jacks (who bounced the ball, picked up the sticks, and dropped the baby)."

"A Hot Day in L'Trel" is an AD&D® adventure for 4-8 PCs of levels 1-3, with at least 10 total levels. With a few modifications to the adventure, PCs of up to 7th level could participate. The PCs should tend toward good or neutral alignments. Ideally, the PCs should have had one or two adventures together before this, so that the group has had time to learn how to work together. The most successful parties will be those with a wide variety of classes and skills, whose players are willing to think, cooperate, and role-play.

This scenario takes place in a world poor in magical items. It is suggested that the PCs have few (one or two) magical items between them, if any at all. Any magical items that are present should be of extremely low power. Suitable items might include a stone with a *continual light* spell cast on it, or one of the weaker magical potions (those with a value of 200 XP or less).

"A Hot Day in L'Trel" is set in the nation of Volkrad. DUNGEON® Magazine has published several scenarios featuring this campaign setting, including "Courier Service" (issue #27), "The Siege of Kratys Freehold" (issue #33), and "Old Man Katan" (issue #41). If the DM has access to these issues, they can provide additional background material. Chronologically, this adventure takes place one month prior to "The Siege of Kratys Freehold."

Beginning the Adventure

To start the adventure, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> It's been a blistering-hot summer in the sprawling coastal city of L'Trel. Tempers simmer, flare, ignite, and

are snuffed out, all in the space of a few panting breaths. Hundreds of people might have died in fights, if anyone had the strength for such foolishness. The omnipresent heat saps away every last spark of energy, leaving none to waste in frivolous activities.

Today seems to be the hottest day of the whole accursed summer. Even the old geezers in their rocking chairs proclaim that today is the hottest day they can remember. Business in the market proceeds at a sluggish pace, half-hearted and listless, a definite change from its usual frantic tempo. The merchants selling ice from the mountains, however, march at double-time to meet the strident demands of their customers.

As the scorching summer sun rises toward noon, every sane being in L'Trel finds a cool place to stop and rest. You relax in the shadowy interior of a pub and listlessly sip a drink, salty sweat pouring off your body.

BOOM! Without warning, a sharp crack of thunder shatters the sultry calm. The wave of sound rolls along, swelling louder with every passing moment. The thunder persists, so you step outside, heart beating faster in the hope that cooling rain is on its way. Other patrons also push their way outside.

Eyes blinking in the harsh sunlight, everyone looks toward the source of the earth-shaking boom: a hillside to the north. A vast column of smoke and flame streams up from the hillside to mar the otherwise clear-blue sky. The patrons of the inn gasp in awe and dismay.

People farther up the street are cursing and running about. Their cries of alarm alert you to the danger. Thousands of pieces of red-hot, flaming debris drop out of the sky, falling in a burning rain across L'Trel. In moments, the crowded streets become a sea of chaos as the crowds rush to find shelter from the deadly shower.

The rain of debris ends quickly, but the damage is already done. As you climb out from your sheltered position, you see what every city-dweller dreads: fire. L'Trel's stone buildings are fire resistant, but many of the buildings and most of the roofs are made of wood. Within moments, the smell of smoke fouls the air, and it seems that every roof in L'Trel has caught fire. The air rings with the clamor of frightened people and the screams of panicked animals.

For the DUNGEON MASTER™

When the mage Kaustos Talbot of L'Trel sealed his deal with the dwarves, it was winter. The streets of L'Trel were covered with snow, and frigid storm winds howled out of the Dividing Mountains to the north. Despite the weather, Kaustos bought 2,000 gallons of the black oily substance that the dwarves found seeping up from cracks in the bottom of one of their mines, and hauled it back to L'Trel. Kaustos was interested in the black oil because it had some of the same properties as the rare alchemical fluid used to manufacture Greek fire and other incendiaries.

In the following weeks, Kaustos consulted ancient tomes and performed a number of experiments and operations on the substance. When his labor was complete, Kaustos had produced 100 gallons of a highly refined, previously unknown alchemical fluid.

Kaustos quickly established that, although the new liquid was flammable, it was also difficult to ignite. So he assumed (erroneously) that a few minimal precautions would suffice to see that it was safely stored. Kaustos purchased a metal storage tank, put the tank in his backyard, and ceased to worry.

However, Kaustos' tank of refined oil had one dangerous quality that he failed to foresee. When heated, the alchemical fluid gives off a vapor, and that vapor is extremely flammable. Under the appropriate conditions of temperature and pressure, the vapor can ignite, causing the liquid to instantly vaporize and ignite as well. Kaustos was unaware of this dangerous property, so he never worried about the fierce rays of the summer sun shining directly on the tank.

Soon high summer came to the crowded, busy seaport of L'Trel, northern outpost of the nation of Volkrad. As occasionally happens, the summer temperatures soared to 120°F.

Kaustos' tank of refined oil had skirted on the edge of self-ignition for the past week. The day the adventure begins, at approximately 2:30 P.M., the fierce heat overwhelms the tank's inadequate safety precautions. The vapor in the tank ignites and causes a violent explosion. Kaustos the mage is killed instantly, and his house and laboratory are utterly destroyed. The explosion sends wreckage rocketing high into the sky, where the hot, dry summer winds spread flaming embers throughout the tinder-dry city, igniting hundreds of rooftop fires in a matter of seconds. L'Trel is destined to go up in flames, like a twig thrust into a campfire.

Running the Adventure

In this scenario, the PCs must deal with the aftermath of a huge fire that sweeps through the city of L'Trel. The adventure assumes that the PCs will spend at least some of their time fighting the fires (along with nearly everyone else in L'Trel). However, the story line focuses on the events that happen because of the fire, not on fighting the fire. The fire itself is used only as a backdrop for the adventure. In some ways, this scenario is more like a campaign setting than an adventure with a specific goal.

The "Confusion and Catastrophe" section covers the events that take place immediately after the explosion. The first part of the adventure is intended to give the PCs a sense of the chaos caused by the fire. Once the PCs complete the "Confusion and Catastrophe" section, they may enlist in the Volkrad army, as discussed in the "Joining the Volkrad Army" section. This section also discusses the DM's options for continuing the adventure if the PCs do not enlist. The final part of the adventure, "On Patrol," deals with some of the fire's long-term effects.

Before beginning play, examine each PC's equipment list and make a short list of items that the PC carries while strolling in L'Trel on a very hot day. Certain items are not allowed under any circumstances: armor (other than a shield), big backpacks full of equipment and rations, etc. On a hot day like this, people wear loose, sun-screening clothing and carry as little as possible: a few coins, a weapon (it always pays to go armed in L'Trel), and perhaps some lunch.

After reading the information contained in "Beginning the Adventure" to the players, give them the equipment lists for their PCs. Inform the players that the list contains every item the PC has with him at the moment. Be pre-

pared to listen to reasonable arguments from the players as to why a certain item may not have been left behind. Give the players a few moments to describe their PCs' reaction to the introductory material, then proceed with the events of the "Confusion and Catastrophe" section.

Players may react to the introduction by stating that their PCs immediately leave L'Trel. If the PCs do this, it is still fairly easy to bring them back into the adventure. When the PCs go back to their lodgings to collect their belongings, conduct one of the encounters from the "Confusion and Catastrophe" section. The PCs will usually stop to help. Even if a PC ignores the encounter and continues on, he will arrive at his lodgings to find that it is engulfed in flames, as mentioned in "Joining the Volkrad Army." Keep in mind that hundreds of people are trying to leave L'Trel, which creates considerable chaos.

As stated in the introduction, L'Trel is currently experiencing a severe heat wave. The strength-sapping effects of the extreme heat cause all combatants to have a −2 penalty on attack rolls. This effect lasts until the heat wave breaks, on the fourth day after the fire.

Although the walls and foundations of most of L'Trel's buildings are built of stone, the roofs and interiors are typically fashioned of wood. The wooden parts of the buildings will burn away in the fire, leaving only shells of stone. Many of the stone walls will crack and fall apart in the fierce heat of the fires, reducing themselves to rubble. These large piles of rubble will remain quite warm for several weeks.

The fire destroys most of L'Trel's granaries, stockyards, and other food. As a result, food prices in L'Trel and the immediate vicinity will be (as a minimum) 20 times higher than the prices listed in the *Player's Handbook* for at least the next six months, until the harvest comes in and some of the reserves are replaced. After that, prices slowly return to normal. Anyone without adequate food loses one point of Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution per week. Death occurs when Constitution reaches zero. A person with no food at all loses two points each week. Lost ability points can be recovered at the rate of one point (in each of the abilities) per week spent with adequate food and rest.

The City of L'Trel

1. Explosion Site. Kaustos Talbot had a large house on the south side of B'Kon Hill, one of the well-to-do areas of L'Trel. The explosion and subsequent fires reduced the house and an area 300′ in diameter around it to smoldering rubble. Enterprising PCs may wish to check out the site of the explosion at some time during the adventure. PCs who sift through the debris should not do it while they are on duty (if they join the Volkrad army), and they should be very careful about being accused of looting.

PCs who take the time to search the debris have a 2% cumulative chance per hour of finding one of the following clues to the cause of the explosion:

—A heavy, locked iron box containing Kaustos' household receipts. The box contains a receipt for a large metal storage tank, which Kaustos purchased from Boltzson's Brewery (area 21). The box also contains a receipt from the dwarven mine where Kaustos obtained the explosive black liquid. The receipt does not specify what Kaustos bought from the mine.

—A twisted, half-melted copper book cover with the title "Greek Fire and Other Incendiaries" etched into its blackened front. The Temple of Knowledge (area 16) has an intact copy of this book.

If the PCs ask around, they find out that the mine mentioned on the receipt is located several days north of L'Trel. If the PCs are serving in the army and they wish to visit the mine, they must first seek a temporary leave of absence. The dwarves will admit to selling Kaustos a large quantity of a black, oily substance that they found at the bottom of one of the mines.

One way to solve the mystery of the explosion is to purchase a small quantity of oil from the dwarves, take it back to L'Trel, and persuade an alchemist to analyze it. After 1-4 months of study, the alchemist can determine that the oil "could easily be transformed into a highly volatile and explosive liquid." The PCs could present their findings to the army and collect the 2,000-gp reward mentioned in the "Rumors" table. Of course, they should give a percentage of the reward to the alchemist.

2. Army Barracks. Several of these small stone buildings are scattered throughout L'Trel. If the PCs opt to join the Volkrad army, they will be assigned quarters in one of the barracks located in the Halfburn district.

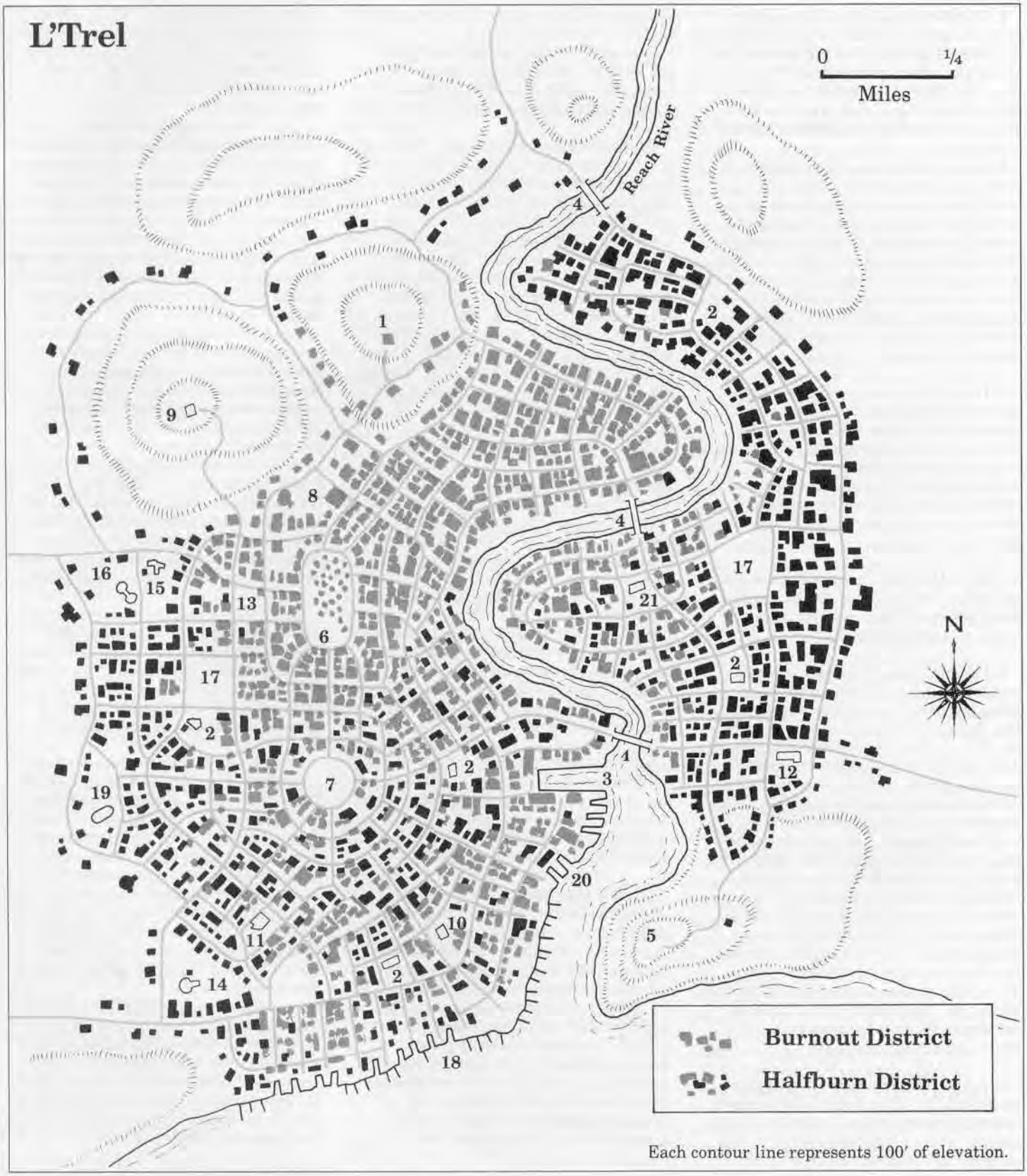
Second Lieutenant L'Roi (see "Other Army Information" in the "Joining the Volkrad Army" section) assigns bunks to the PC soldiers. Each PC shares a bunk with two other soldiers, on a rotating basis. The bunks provide the PCs a relatively safe place to sleep while they are off duty, although they do not have to sleep here. Bunk houses are typically cramped, sweaty, and smelly.

Two six-man units of soldiers are always on guard duty outside a barracks building. The guards do not admit anyone dressed as a civilian. However, nonuniformed persons may gain admittance upon superior officer approval (lieutenant or higher). If, for example, a PC's uniform is stolen, he will have to convince the barracks guards to let him in, or appeal to a senior officer. Alternatively, the DM could assign the PCs to guard the barracks on one of their patrol shifts. An NPC dressed in ripped and tattered clothing approaches the PCs and insists that he is a soldier. The truth of the man's statement is left for the DM to decide.

Barracks guards (12): AL any N or G; AC 4; MV 12; F2 (×2), F1 (×2); hp 11 (×6), 6 (×6); THAC0 19, 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 13; chain mail, shield, short sword, spear.

3. Shipyards. The shipyards, ships, and nearby docks are damaged extensively by the fires. One of the docked vessels, the *Prospectus,* has been laden with kegs of brandy from Boltzson's Brewery (area 21) and may explode if the on-board fires spread out of control. PCs patrolling the Riverside district (area 20) may have to coordinate an evacuation of the area, or worse, help quell the flames on the deck of the doomed ship.

4. Bridges. Three bridges cross the Reach river: the Norbridge (located just north of the city), the Taybridge (in the Burnout district), and the Donbridge (near the shipyards). All three bridges have stone foundations. Sturdy wooden beams provide the supports and road surface. The fire badly damages Taybridge, although foot traffic is still possible. The fire does not damage the other two bridges.


L'Trel
0
1/4
Miles
Reach River
N
Burnout District
Halfburn District
Each contour line represents 100' of elevation.

5. Wicked Man's Bluff. Standing atop this tall landmark, one can survey the entire city and get an appreciation of the awesome damage done by the fire. The bluff is located at the mouth of the Reach River and is barren rock. The cliffs are sheer and dangerous for climbing.

The local authorities have made proposals to build a fortress atop this bluff—one large enough to house an entire garrison and fend off pirate attacks. However, the chaos triggered by the fire will demand that such plans be put on hold indefinitely. L'Trel may be in severe danger of pirate attacks in the coming months, since most of the naval vessels in port at the time of the fire are severely damaged.

6. High Market. Merchants usually pack this open area, taking up every square foot of space with their colorful tents and canopied wagons. During the fire, the market becomes a scene of bedlam and chaos. Fires incinerate most of the tents and trigger an onslaught of looting, mugging, and other criminal activity.

7. Low Market. This market caters to the poorer folk of L'Trel. Like the High Market (area 6), this area becomes a scene of chaos during the fire.

8. Courthouse. This large wooden building is where L'Trel's civil court cases are heard and where hired barristers do most of their business. During the fire, this building is badly damaged. As a result, all civil cases are handled through private judges, Volkrad army detention centers, or the garrison headquarters atop Halley's Seat (area 9).

If the PCs search through the remaining records at the courthouse, they have a 2% cumulative chance per hour of finding the burned and tattered remains of the building permit Kaustos Talbot filed for erecting his backyard storage tank. The permit does not specify what was to be stored in the tank. The clerks at the courthouse will let the PCs search the records only if the adventurers promise to clean up some of the mess as they search.

9. Halley's Seat. This is the highest point in L'Trel. The army headquarters and main garrison are located in a tight cluster of stone buildings atop the hill. At least 100 soldiers, many of them seasoned combat veterans, are stationed here at all times of the day.

Expensive homes and estates line the hill's lower slopes. These large residences belong to wealthy merchants, judges, guildmasters, and the like.

10. The Hammered Dwarf. This inn is a favorite watering hole of the natives of the Wharfside and Riverside districts and is one of L'Trel's seedier establishments. The inn has one communal sleeping chamber. A sleeping place for one night costs 1 cp, and meals cost 1 sp each. Even when costs rise because of the fire (see "Running the Adventure," page 11), prices here are never more than 5 cp and 12 sp. The innkeeper is a dwarf named Drae Hammarson, a gruff fellow who likes hurling obnoxious drunkards out the door.

Drae Hammarson (dwarf): AL N; AC 9 (6 with armor); MV 6; F4; hp 36; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 17, D 15, C 15; ML 14; club, short sword, studded leather armor (not worn while Drae is working at the inn).

Drae has kept the inn's cellar locked ever since wererats clawed their way into the basement. Drae makes no mention of the creatures to his patrons, just in case they decide to take their money elsewhere.

Wererats (2): INT very; AL LE; AC 6; MV 12; HD 3+1; hp 14, 9; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA surprise; SD hit only by silver or magical weapon; SZ S (3'); ML 12; XP 270 each; MM/237 (Lycanthrope).

The wererats use Drae's basement as a bolthole, and do not disturb anyone who doesn't disturb them. They venture out at night to scavenge what they can, and have amassed a hoard of silverware (worth 925 gp), crockery (worth about 20 gp), 291 sp, and 448 cp.

11. The Half Moon. This reputable tavern offers good food and lodging for an affordable price 5 sp for a three-course meal, 7 sp for a bed for the night. However, the inn is also a secret meeting place for one of the local thieves' guilds (which becomes quite active as the fires start spreading throughout L'Trel). Arwe and the other thieves encountered on Day 6 (see "On Patrol") are regular patrons here. The innkeeper, Rufus, is friendly but secretive. As an agent of the thieves' guild, he is always getting "red-hot tips" from the talkative clientele.

Rufus: AL N; AC 7; MV 12; T4; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (backstab ×2); D 17; ML 11; XP 175; PP 50%, OL 47%, FT 35%, MS 38%, HS 30%, DN 15%, CW 88%, RL 20%; dagger.

12. The Mirthful Minstrel. This is the most noteworthy and expensive tavern in L'Trel. The guest rooms are lavish, the service is impeccable, and the food is delicious. The cost for a single room for one night is 5 gp. The cost to rent a horse stall is 1 gp per night! After food and hay become scarce, the costs rise to 6 gp and 2 gp, but the quality of food and lodging drops only slightly.

Sariel D'Varos, a half-elven enchantress, owns the Mirthful Minstrel in partnership with L'Trel's small but powerful wizard's guild. Sariel sometimes uses her magic to lure wealthy but tight-pursed merchants into her pricey establishment.

Sariel D'Varos (half-elf): AL CG; AC 8; MV 12; M5; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; I 16, Ch 16; ML 10; *ring of protection +2*. Spells: *cantrip, charm person, detect magic, friends, sleep; deeppockets, forget, ray of enfeeblement; hold person, suggestion.*

13. The Dog and Partridge. This well-to-do establishment is one of a handful of places where PCs can secure rooms in L'Trel. During the "Confusion and Catastrophe" section, this inn is destroyed by the fire. Nothing is left except some charred support timbers.

14. Temple of Healing. This temple is dedicated to a god of healing in the DM's campaign. Adventurers wounded beyond the help of the army infirmaries (located in each barracks) may receive medical attention here. During the fire, patients requiring treatment for burns, broken bones, stomach sickness, and other painful afflictions overburden the priests of this temple. The PCs must wait to be served like everyone else; their status in the army gives them no special consideration.

In normal times, a potion of *healing* could be acquired here for a donation of 70-100 gp. Because of the increased demand after the fire, potions sell for at least twice the normal price. In any case, the priests reserve their limited supply of potions for those in desperate need. Magical items are rare on this world.

15. Temple of War. PC fighters who join the Volkrad army may come here to pray to whatever war god exists in the DM's campaign. If the DM is using the optional training rules for level advancement (see the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 49), fighters may train here. The priests of this temple often visit the local army infirmaries to lend a healing hand when needed.

16. Temple of Knowledge. This temple consists of two stone towers and houses L'Trel's library. The library receives support from both the Volkrad government and the local mage's guild. Several mages (of 1st-5th level) supervise the library. Mages and army officers above the rank of sergeant may visit the temple and read its books, but may not remove any books from within. Other citizens may use the library for a yearly fee of 100 gp.

Stealing books from the Temple of Knowledge is a serious offense. Such crimes are handled through the offices of L'Trel's mage's guild—and woe to any PC who earns this guild's animosity. Mages will refuse to cast spells for nonmage PCs, including *identify* spells, and mage PCs may be blacklisted and barred from training for level advancement at the guild.

17. Cemeteries. L'Trel has two large cemeteries, one on each side of the Reach River. The cemeteries are surrounded by groves of trees, many of which are set ablaze by the sweeping fires. In the weeks following the explosion, some of L'Trel's indigent citizens make these graveyards their home, and ghouls use these cemeteries as hunting grounds for food (see "Random Encounters on Patrol" for statistics).

18. Wharfside District. This section of L'Trel is dangerous at the best of times, and the fires only make things worse. The housing in this district is poor, and the thieves' guilds have a firm grip on the local population. Looters and wererats pose a serious threat to any patrol unit assigned to this region (see area 10 and Day 14 for statistics).

19. Theater. Once the site of L'Trel's greatest stage spectacles, this building will be converted into a food store and placed under the army's control once martial law is imposed. The PCs may be assigned to guard this facility at some time during their patrol. A food riot breaks out here on Day 12 of the PCs' patrol, as noted in the "On Patrol" section.

20. Riverside District. Much of this region is damaged during the fire, including the nearby shipyards (area 3). Most of the city's warehouses are located in this district, and they become the targets of mass-looting by L'Trel's hungry citizens. Merchants have taken the liberty of hiring mercenaries to guard those warehouses still standing. The DM could assign the PCs to help guard some of these warehouses during one of their patrol shifts. See Day 12 in the "On Patrol" section for a description of a food riot.

21. Boltzson's Brewery. This largely stone building escapes any serious damage from the fire. The DM may, however, stage an encounter in which the PCs' patrol unit helps the brewery workers move barrels of ale from a burning storage shed.

The brewery is owned and operated by a dwarf, Kristov Boltzson. Kristov is a shrewd businessman with no time for idle chitchat. If asked, he admits he sold a metal storage tank (which his brewery once kept for storing and fermenting beer) some months ago. The dwarf remembers only that the purchaser was a human. At the time, Kristov considered the deal to be quite a bargain.

A 20-gallon barrel of Kristov's ale fetches about 80 sp (8 gp) on the market, roughly 4 sp per gallon. Anyone who has a problem with this price may "discuss" the matter with Kristov's brutal dwarven henchmen, Dwain and Rogg.

Kristov Boltzson (dwarf): AL N; AC 10; MV 6; 0-level; hp 7; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 13; XP 15; dagger.

Dwain and **Rogg** (dwarves): AL NE; AC 5; MV 6; F3; hp 26, 22; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 17, C 15; ML 14; XP 65 each; chain mail, battle axe.

Confusion and Catastrophe

This section of the adventure assumes that the PCs are out and about in L'Trel at the time of the explosion, in the areas that will become known as the Burnout and Halfburn districts. This is a reasonable assumption, since these two areas

encompass most of the inner city of L'Trel, where the PCs are most likely to be. Fighters may be at a practice ground or in a cool tavern, priests may be in their temples. Other PCs could be out in the market buying food for dinner, shopping for new equipment, etc. In short, at the time of the explosion, the PCs are involved in the day-to-day details of their life in L'Trel.

These encounters take place during the hours just after the explosion. The exact time and location of each encounter is up to the DM, although they all take place in either the Burnout or Halfburn districts. The initial encounters are suitable for 1-2 PCs. After reading through this section, the DM should decide which PC(s) are best suited to each encounter, and play through that encounter with the appropriate players. Each of the initial encounters should take only a few minutes to complete.

As a time-consuming (but interesting) option, as long as the PCs are not together, isolate the players as well. Put the players in different rooms, or conduct each encounter as a short adventure involving the DM and the appropriate player. This tactic forces the players to rely on their own ideas and resources, and prevents kibitzing and "spirit voices."

A particular PC (or set of PCs) may go through more than one encounter before going on to the second half of the adventure. Two PCs could also go through separate encounters, then meet up in the street and go through an encounter together. If there are more than seven PCs, the DM will either have to allow some PCs to operate together or devise additional encounters.

Jumping M'Tilda

This encounter works best with two PCs. As the adventurers struggle through the jumbled, disordered streets, they see a small knot of people standing in an alleyway. The people are gazing nervously at the fifth-floor window (40' up) of a rapidly burning building. A young woman holding a baby perches on the windowsill. The PCs can see bright orange flames in the apartment behind her. The people in the crowd mill around, unsure of what to do. The woman, M'Tilda, looks back and forth between the cobblestones far below and the leaping flames behind her. Her panic is increasing by the second.

This impasse requires PC initiative to break. The bystanders want to help, but they need someone decisive to tell them what to do. They follow any PC suggestion except going into the burning building (which is obviously a deathtrap). Anyone in the building takes 3d6 hp damage per round, although a saving throw vs. breath weapon for half damage is allowed.

The PCs could ask M'Tilda to throw her baby down, to be caught by the people below. M'Tilda will do this (at the request of the PCs) if she makes a morale check, modified by any PC Charisma reaction bonuses. The DM should make a separate morale check for each PC who attempts to talk the woman into throwing the baby down.

To catch the baby, a PC must make a Dexterity check. If he fails, the baby dies and M'Tilda leaps to the ground, crying with grief. If two or more people stretch out a blanket or cloak as a safety net, check against the highest Dexterity in the group, with an additional +2 bonus to the roll. M'Tilda can be talked into jumping onto a blanket if two or more people hold it for her. However, since M'Tilda is fairly heavy, she takes 1d6 hp damage from the 40' jump, even if the PCs catch her in the blanket. Several other mage spells, such as *feather fall* and *levitate,* may be useful in this situation.

Four rounds after the PCs arrive in the alley, the fire in the apartment roars out of control. If she has not been rescued by this time, M'Tilda jumps into the alleyway as the flames lick her back, and dies in the fall. However, she cradles her baby with her body, so it survives.

M'Tilda: AL LG; AC 10; MV 12; F1; hp 8; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 9, D 15, C 12, I 9, W 10, Ch 11; ML 13; age 20.

M'Tilda served three years in the army and was honorably discharged as a private first class (F1). She is trained to use a dagger, light crossbow, short sword, and spear. M'Tilda's husband has already died in the fire. If she survives the fire, M'Tilda would make an admirable henchman for one of the PCs, although her baby may complicate the situation. The DM should award a 50-XP bonus to each PC if M'Tilda or her baby is rescued.

Free Vegetables

This encounter works best with two PCs. As the PCs move along a street crowded with panicked animals and people, the swirling crowds part for a second to reveal several people looting an overturned vegetable cart. From where the PCs are standing, they can see that someone is pinned under the cart. If the PCs approach, the looters continue to steal vegetables until the PCs do or say something. Any gesture or warning is enough to make the looters run away at top speed. Once the PCs are within 10' of the heavy, hand-drawn cart, they see that the victim pinned underneath is an unconscious old man with a deep, oozing scalp wound.

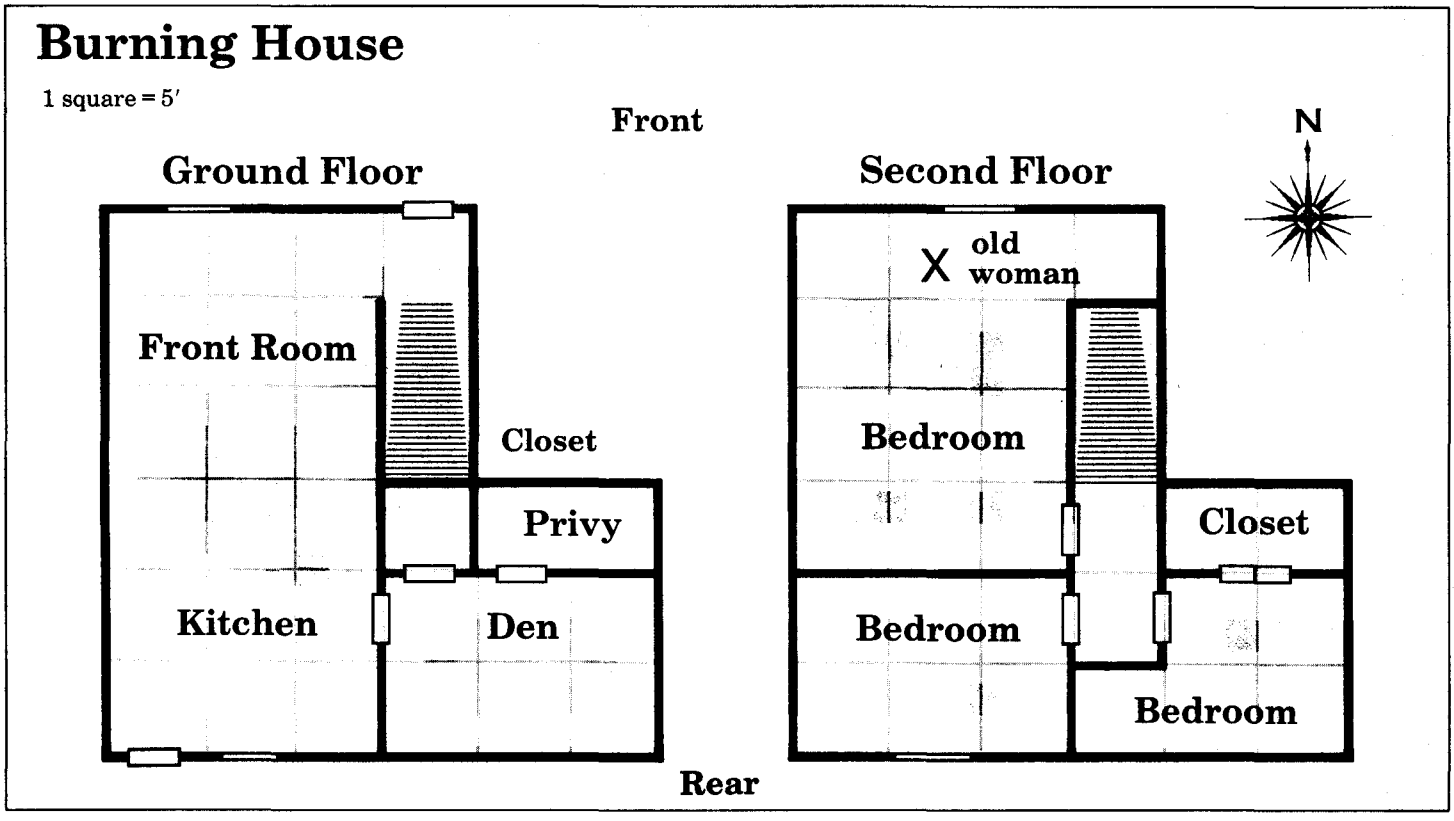
The vegetable cart belongs to Pitar Kratys, the man trapped beneath it. Pitar was trapped when a panicked team of horses brushed his cart and flipped it into the air so that it landed on him. In order to lift the cart enough to slide Pitar out from underneath it, the PCs must make a successful open-doors roll.

Pitar is at −3 hp (or 1 hp if the DM does not use the optional negative hit point rules). In any case, Pitar wakes up after three days if he is given normal medical attention, sooner if the PCs use magic to heal him. If the PCs search the streets for three turns, they can find a hospice, a sort of medical emergency center, where they can leave Pitar for a few days until he recovers. They could also leave him at the Temple of Healing (area 14). Award 50 XP to each PC who helped save Pitar and protect his wagon.

Pitar Kratys: AL CG; AC 10; MV 9; F7; hp 32 (−3); THAC0 14; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; S 15, D 8, C 9, I 11, W 16, Ch 16; ML 18; age 67. Proficiencies: agriculture, animal handling, aerial riding (giant eagle), horse riding, read/write, long sword, dagger, spear, long bow, short sword (specialized).

Pitar Kratys spent nearly his entire adult life as an officer in the Volkrad army, retiring with the rank of major. The army may recall Pitar to active duty in the aftermath of the fire. As a reward for saving his life, Pitar will provide free training (at least one level's worth, or more at the DM's discretion) to any PC fighters involved in his rescue. If the DM does not use the optional training rules, Pitar may offer to teach a PC a new weapon or nonweapon proficiency.

In addition, Pitar is the father of Captain Tarran Kratys, one of the main



NPCs in the module "The Siege of Kratys Freehold" (issue #33). If the PCs rescue Pitar, the old man provides a logical adventure hook to that module. In the chaotic aftermath of L'Trel's destruction, Pitar could ask the PCs to escort him to his son's freehold. If the PCs have joined the Volkrad army, they will have to ask their superior officer for several days of leave.

Runaway

This encounter works best with one PC, preferably a ranger or druid. A runaway horse, snorting and rolling its eyes in fear, rampages down the street toward the PC. People frantically dive out of the way of the horse's steel-shod hooves. The horse is dragging a young man along the pavement. The young man has one foot caught up in a stirrup, and he is bouncing brutally along the cobbled street.

A PC who reacts immediately has a chance to run out and catch the horse's reins. Otherwise, the horse gallops down the street, moving out of range in a matter of seconds. If the PC runs after the horse, make a horse-riding or animal handling nonweapon proficiency check. If the check is successful, the PC brings the horse under control. A ranger should be allowed to use his animal empathy ability to attempt to control the horse. A druid PC may have a spell (such as *remove fear*) capable of stopping the horse's wild rampage.

The DM should award a 50-XP bonus if the PC manages to rescue the young man. The fellow introduces himself as Kerga, a gypsy. Kerga gives the PC one of his earrings as a sign of thanks. Only gypsy goldsmiths make this style of earring. Anyone who has one of these earrings is instantly identified as either a gypsy or as the friend of a gypsy. The gypsy earring can serve as a hook for introducing future adventures. A gypsy could recognize the earring and ask the PC for help, or he could befriend the PC and offer assistance.

Kerga: AL LN; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 5 (2); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 9, D 15, C 10, I 10, W 8, Ch 12; ML 10; age 14; two gold earrings (3 gp each), dagger, short sword.

Riding horse: INT animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 24; HD 2; hp 9; THAC0 19; #AT 2; Dmg 1-4/1-4; ML 7; XP 65; MM/194 (Horse).

The Burning House

This encounter works best with two or more PCs. The DM should reserve this encounter for experienced players who act quickly and without hesitation. The map on this page represents one house in a long street of row-houses.

The PCs see several people pointing excitedly at the second-story window of a fine and expensive house. Smoke and flames are leaping from the roof, and the PCs can see flames through the ground-floor windows. The windows are glass, indicating that the house is owned by a rich person. If the PCs question the people in the crowd, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> The people in the crowd burst into an excited babble. After a few moments, you sort out the gist of it. Several people claim that they saw an old woman in the second-floor window. The old woman, obviously very feeble and affected by the smoke, was trying to open the window when she collapsed. Everyone in the crowd loudly agrees that someone should go

into the burning building to check, but no one seems to be volunteering. You can understand why; the house looks dangerous.

The front door is cool to the touch, indicating that the room beyond is not yet filled with fire. If the PCs check this before attempting to open the door, award a bonus of 50 XP to the PC(s) as a reward for clear thinking. The front door is locked. The lock can be picked (at a −10% penalty to the pick-locks roll), or the PCs could try to batter the door down. One attempt to force the door down can be made each round. If the PCs ask for help, two of the NPCs will volunteer, giving a +2 bonus to the open-doors roll. The PCs could also get into the house by breaking a window and climbing in. NPCs do not enter the house under any circumstances.

Just before the PCs go into the house, the DM should roll 1d6+4. This is the number of rounds left before the house collapses. If the PCs get into the house by breaking a window, add one round to this time. Anyone inside the house at the moment of collapse takes 6d6 hp damage from the inferno (saving throw vs. breath weapon for half damage). Once the PCs are inside the house, they must each make a Constitution check every three rounds. Every time the check fails, the PC takes 1d6 hp damage from smoke inhalation and heat.

The ground floor rooms are clear enough to move around in, although flames are spreading rapidly. If the PCs do not hesitate, it takes one round to run up the stairs and get into the room where the woman was seen. It takes one more round to reach her, collapsed on the floor near the window at the location marked X.

As soon as the PCs locate the old woman, tell them that the ceiling appears to be on the verge of collapse. It takes two more rounds to carry or drag the woman back down the stairs and out of the burning building. Thus, if the PCs do not hesitate, they are guaranteed just enough time to rescue the woman and get out (five rounds is the minimum time before the house collapses). If the PCs stop to rescue some of the valuables from the flames, each PC can grab 100-400 (1d4×100) gp worth of valuable items per round, such as silverware, ceramics or glass, and jewelry. If they are lucky, and not too greedy, the PCs may even get out of the house before it collapses.

Award a 150-XP bonus to each PC if the old woman is rescued. The old woman is named Blaise, and she wakes up 10-40 rounds after she is removed from the building. Blaise needs a healer's attention for a further 1-6 days. The PCs can take her to a hospice, about 30 minutes away.

Blaise: AL N; AC 10; MV 9; M4; hp 9 (currently 0); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 6, D 8, C 7, I 15, W 13, Ch 11; ML 12; age 74. Spells: *cantrip, identify, detect magic; fool's gold, stinking cloud.*

Blaise is a retired merchant. Her magical talents, although minor, have served her well in the past.

Six months from now, when L'Trel starts to recover from the fire, Blaise hires a barrister and sues the PCs involved in her rescue. Blaise claims that the PCs did not exercise reasonable care when they carried or dragged her down the stairs, and that she has a permanently wrenched back as a result of their carelessness. The trial will take place in a L'Trel civil court, with Blaise seeking 2,000 gp in damages from the PCs.

The PCs may assume that Blaise is faking her injury. However, unless the PCs specifically stated at the time of the rescue that they were very careful with the woman, she really was injured. Imagine the players' frustration if the PCs follow the old woman around for days, trying to find proof that she is faking!

The situation with Blaise is rife with role-playing opportunities. Among other things, the PCs will have to hire a lawyer (at a high cost), prepare a defense, and testify at their trial. The DM should be prepared to role-play through a trial and listen to the defense arguments presented by the PCs.

The argument "she would have died if we had not rescued her" is not a valid defense. Volkrad law states that a standard of reasonable care still applies in any rescue. Unless the players specifically stated during the rescue that the PCs were very careful with the woman, the trial judge decides for Blaise.

In L'Trel courts, the loser in a civil suit pays all legal fees for both sides. The amount left to the DM, but could go as high as 1,000 gp for a drawn-out case involving character witnesses and testimony from healers.

Joining the Volkrad Army

The catastrophic fires have created a desperate situation in L'Trel. Within hours after the blazes start, the Volkrad army declares martial law in L'Trel. The army needs additional soldiers to bring the fires under control, enforce the state of martial law, and protect the remaining food stores. In this middle section of the adventure, the PCs are given the opportunity to enlist.

After the PCs have each been through at least one of the encounters from the "Confusion and Catastrophe" section, read or paraphrase the following linking paragraphs to the players. The DM may have to re-word this introduction slightly if the PC was a priest staying at a temple, a thief staying in a guild safe-house, etc.

Sometime during the chaotic hours after the explosion, you returned to your inn just in time to discover that the building was a blazing inferno. To your despair, most of your belongings were destroyed in the fire. All that remained were a few scorched scraps and some unidentifiable bits of metal. You've also heard rumors of vast destruction in other parts of L'Trel. Apparently, L'Trel's famous shipyards are now reduced to ash, along with most of L'Trel's granaries, stockyards, and smokehouses. The fires still rage, although they show some signs of being brought under control.

At one point, you managed to meet up with a few of your companions. You are currently slumped in a sheltered alley along with your friends and a group of fire-fighters, trying to catch a few moments of rest. A water skin makes the rounds. The tepid water tastes like nectar as it passes down your raw, smoke-ravaged throat.

At first, nobody pays attention to the singed man who stumbles into the alley, reeling with fatigue. He's just another exhausted fire-fighter. The man slumps against the wall for a moment, breath rasping in and out of his tired lungs. After a few moments, the man struggles to his feet and speaks, addressing everyone in the sheltered alleyway. At this point, you realize that the man's dark, fire-damaged tunic is actually the snow-white dress tunic of an army officer, covered in layers of soot, blood, and grime.

"Citizens of L'Trel. I am Sergeant, excuse me, I mean Second Lieutenant L'Roi of the L'Trel branch of the Volkrad Army. I have been sent to inform you that the army has declared martial law in L'Trel. The state of emergency will remain in effect until the damage caused by the fire can be assessed and repairs are well underway.

"To speed the recovery from this catastrophe, the army is asking for volunteers, to join until the crisis has passed. Volunteers will be required to help with fire-fighting, anti-looting patrols, and enforcing the state of martial law. Volunteers will be paid five silver pieces per day and given one meal per day, guaranteed. If anyone's interested, follow me to the barracks."

At the end of his speech, Lieutenant L'Roi turns and shuffles out of the alleyway. A few of the hardier people in the alley clamber to their feet and stagger off after the lieutenant. The majority of the people simply gaze after him, too exhausted to move, and quickly lapse into a deep, weary slumber.

L'Roi has been a soldier since he was 14 years old. He was given a field promotion about two hours after the army declared martial law.

Second Lieutenant L'Roi: AL LG; AC 5; MV 12; F2; hp 16 (10); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 14, D 10, C 10, I 13, W 12, Ch 13; ML 14; age 24; short sword, dagger. Proficiencies: brewing, elvish, endurance, gaming, short sword, dagger, spear.

If the PCs follow L'Roi as he shuffles out of the alleyway, proceed to "Swearing the Oath." If the PCs opt not to join the army, there are several ways to proceed. First, stress the poverty of the PCs. As stated in the introduction for this section, the fire destroyed most of the PCs' possessions. Some of the PCs' belongings may have survived the fire, especially if the PCs took the precaution of not storing all of their belongings in one building. Look through the list of the PCs' possessions and decide which items may have been spared. The poverty of the PCs may convince them to join the army after all.

Some of the "On Patrol" encounters work even if the PCs do not enlist. In particular, a dozen armed men could jump the PCs and attempt to take the party as slaves (see Day 21). Heroes who do not enlist will have a difficult time surviving as food becomes scarcer and prices increase, looting and violence become commonplace, and dread creatures begin to stalk the night.

Swearing the Oath

If the PCs opt to join the army, read or paraphrase the following information to the players:

Second Lieutenant L'Roi stumbles along the ash-strewn street and eventually leads you to a half-burned army barracks. As you enter the barracks, you hear the moans and cries of wounded soldiers. Army priests filter through the depressing scene, dispensing what help they can.

L'Roi quickly leads you and a few others through an oath of service to the Volkrad Army. When everyone has completed the oath, L'Roi spends a few moments explaining your new responsibilities. The lieutenant informs you that your duties for the next three months are:

—To prevent looting, bringing the looters in alive for judgment, if possible,

—Report and attempt to put out any fires that you come across,

—Search for and rescue any survivors that may still be trapped,

—Quell lawlessness, especially vigilantes, and

—Help gather the dead so that they can be buried.

L'Roi explains that you are to remain on patrol for at least 16 hours every day. The lieutenant issues each of you an army uniform. Many of the uniforms are of an older style than L'Roi's, and none of them fit very well. L'Roi assures you that the uniform guarantees you one meal a day from the army kitchens. He also mentions that any soldier caught selling army food to private citizens will be court-martialed and sentenced to life at hard labor. With that dire warning ringing in your ears, L'Roi assigns each of you a bunk in the barracks.

All the PCs are initially sworn in as privates. L'Roi designates the PC with the most military experience (highest-level fighter) a sergeant, who receives 6 sp per day. The PC sergeant has the additional duty to brief L'Roi on the activities of his patrol group once per day. L'Roi also orders the PC sergeant to bring any looters and bodies that they find to the barracks, where such matters will be handled. The other PCs are assigned to the PC sergeant's patrol group. L'Roi then tiredly orders the new sergeant to take his group out on patrol.

If there are not enough PCs to make up a complete six-man patrol unit, round out the PC group with a few NPC soldiers or pregenerated NPCs. See the description of the army barracks (area 2) for typical NPC soldier statistics. In light of the current situation, L'Roi is willing to allow his sergeants to have a few more men than a normal patrol group. If there are more than six PCs, he puts them all in the same unit anyway.

Other Army Information

There are several benefits to joining the army. The PCs can collect their daily meal in the barracks. Meals usually consist of bread, some sort of soup, and a piece of fruit. As the weeks go on and supplies get shorter, the meals get smaller. One meal per day is not enough food to live on, especially for active soldiers. The PCs must purchase food to supplement their army rations. If the PCs do not purchase additional food, they suffer the penalties for insufficient food: A −1 cumulative penalty to Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution every week.

The army also provides medical attention to wounded soldiers. One of the army healers at the barracks will attend to PCs who have been wounded (75% or more hp gone) in the performance of their duties. Army healers have proficiency in healing and herbalism but no spell-casting abilities.

The army provides free training for its personnel (or at a greatly reduced cost, at the DM's option). The army has facilities to train warriors and can make arrangements with private tutors to train priests, mages, and rogues (scouts). Normally, training takes place after an adventure is complete. In this case, however, the "adventure" takes place over a three-month period, so there is plenty of time to go through level advancement.

Once the PCs go out on patrol, they are on their own. Nothing other than alignment and L'Roi's warning prevents them from looting. However, if the PCs come back to the barracks at night with lots of gold, or if a citizen lodges a complaint against the PCs, the army will investigate. The Volkrad army makes routine use of the spells *detect lie* and *speak with dead*. If there is any question of misconduct on the part of a soldier, the army will question both the soldier and the plaintiff with magic.

Volkrad martial law is harsh, although the army avoids executions if possible. Volkrad is simply too short of manpower to execute anyone without an exceptional reason. In most cases, civilians caught looting are sentenced to 10-20 years of hard labor (maintaining roads, making big rocks into small ones, digging ditches, cleaning sewers, building bridges, etc.). The army enforces the penalties for looting very strictly over the next few months. Any army personnel caught looting are sentenced to life at hard labor. Rioters are typically sentenced to 5-10 years of hard labor.

Random Encounters On Patrol

These encounters occur between events listed in the "On Patrol" section. Roll 1d6 for each day that the PCs spend patrolling. A roll of 1 indicates an encounter. Next roll 1d12 to determine the hour of the encounter. Then roll 1d6 to determine whether the encounter takes place between midnight and noon (1-3) or between noon and midnight (4-6). Finally, roll 1d00 to determine the encounter:

01-20 **Giant rats:** (10-40); INT animal; AL N(E); AC 7; MV 12, swim 6; HD ½; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA 5% chance per wound of causing a disease; SZ T (2′ long); ML 6; XP 15 each; MM/300.

These giant rats are scavenging among the numerous bodies lying around. Giant rats are encountered less frequently as food becomes scarce in L'Trel and people start hunting rats for food.

21-40 **Dogs:** (1d6 + 4); INT semi; AL N; AC 7; MV 15; HD 1 + 1; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SZ S (3′ long); ML 7; XP 15 each; MM/57 (Wild Dog, modified).

The dogs are busy scavenging and do not attack living targets unless they are bothered. The dogs gradually disappear as food gets scarce.

41-60 **Looters** (4): AL any N; AC 10; MV 12; F1 or 0-level human; hp 10, 8, 6, 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SZ M; ML 9; XP 15 each.

The looters are rummaging in the burned-out shell of a home or a business. Each looter has a short sword, a bag with 1-3 days worth of scavenged food, and 1-100 gp worth of looted valuables.

61-80 **Fire:** The PCs come across a blazing building, ignited by some still-smoldering ashes, by Baernan the fire elemental, or by the fire cultists (see the "Rumors" sidebar).

The PCs can extinguish the fire in 1d3 + 2 hours. Several dozen NPCs in the area help the PCs put out the fire. At the DM's option, the PCs could rescue someone from the building.

81-90 **Ghouls:** (1-2); INT low; AL CE; AC 6; MV 9; HD 2; hp 12, 6; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA paralyzation; SZ M (5′ tall); ML 11; XP 175 each; MM/131.

These ghouls come out at night to stun or kill new victims and drag them off to the cemeteries (area 17). Ghoul paralysis lasts 1d6 + 2 rounds. Ghouls are immune to *sleep* and *charm* spells, although a *protection from evil* spell will keep them completely at bay. Each ghoul carries 1d20 + 30 gp worth of looted jewelry and finery.

91-00 **Wererats:** (1-4); INT 12; AL LE; AC 6; MV 12; HD 3 + 1; hp 20, 14, 13, 10; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA surprise; SD silver or magical weapons to hit; SZ S to M; ML 11; XP 270 each; MM/237 (Lycanthrope).

This encounter occurs only at night, and should not be used unless the PCs have at least two silver or magical weapons. The PCs come across several large rats dragging an unconscious man and a small screaming child into the sewers. Each wererat has either a dagger or a short sword. Wererats can summon and control 2-12 giant rats (see 1-20 above) and are usually seen in giant rat form.

On Patrol

This section of the adventure illustrates the desperate situation that arises after the fire sweeps through L'Trel. The DM should read the entire "On Patrol" section before beginning play for this section. To speed play, plan out in advance when the PCs hear a rumor, which rumor they hear, and who they hear it from.

The PCs should go through all the encounters listed in the "On Patrol" section. The DM can change the encounter order if desired, although the encounters work best in the order listed. For days without a specified encounter, roll on the "Random Encounters On Patrol" table to see if an encounter occurs. To speed play, it may help to predetermine the "random" encounters.

Days 1-3

Within hours of the fire, the citizens of L'Trel began calling the worst-affected area the "Burnout" district. Here the fires destroyed 90% of the buildings, and the few remaining buildings are severely damaged. The Burnout district is nearly abandoned by Day 3.

The fire-fighting crews had better luck containing blazes in the area that becomes known as the "Halfburn" district. In this area, only 20% of the buildings were reduced to ruin. The remaining 80% are lightly to moderately damaged. See the map of L'Trel for an indication of the extent of these two districts.

The DM should conduct an encounter from the "Random Encounters On Patrol" table on each of the first three days. Remember, because of the heat wave, there is a −2 penalty to attack rolls during any combat. The patrol duty shifts are extremely long, and the heat prevents people from getting a good sleep, so the combat penalty applies even if the PCs are on night patrol. The DM can conduct the three random encounters even if the PCs do not enlist.

Day 4

Make sure that the PCs hear rumors 5 and 8 before continuing, then read or paraphrase the following information to the players:

> It has been four days since the fires started, martial law was declared, and you volunteered to join the army. There is some good news: The main fires have burned themselves out. The fire-fighting crews are finally getting a few hours of rest, although the sporadic fires that spring up at random still keep them busy. In addition, the heat wave seems to have finally broken; the weather is slightly cooler. On the down side, you have heard official news indicating that at least half of L'Trel's granaries and stockyards were destroyed. It looks like there are lean times ahead for L'Trel.

After Day 4, the combat penalties for extreme heat no longer apply.

Day 5

The PCs should hear rumors 10 and 16 today. In addition, the DM should conduct a random encounter with a burning building (see the "Random Encounters On Patrol" table). This encounter occurs somewhere in the Burnout district (see the map of L'Trel). Alternatively, the DM could conduct this encounter at Boltzson's Brewery (area 21). Mention that the PCs come across a small fire about every third day, but play through only the first fire. Otherwise, the fire encounters could become mind-numbingly boring.

Day 6

This encounter occurs at night, while the PCs are patrolling near High Market (area 6). Because of the hot rubble, infravision based on heat will not work in the Burnout district. Magical infravision functions normally (see *DMG,* page 119).

To begin this encounter, the DM should perform a hear-noise check for each PC. If none of the PCs hear anything, skip the encounter. If any checks succeed, the PC(s) hears faint scraping noises coming from a relatively intact building. The noises are caused by a group of robbers who are systematically looting a jewelry store. Two of the robbers are posted as guards, so it is very difficult to surprise the group.

Arwe (half-elf): AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; T4; hp 16; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA backstab, thief abilities, +3 to hit with missile weapons; S 10, D 17, C 11, I 12, W 10, Ch 14; ML 13; PP 40%, OL 67%, FT 40%, MS 33%, HS 30%, DN 15%, CW 88%, RL 10%; XP 420. Arwe is outfitted with matte-black studded leather armor, a light crossbow (10 quarrels), a throwing dagger, and a short sword.

Scharfe, Slash, and **Kara:** AL LE; AC 7; MV 12; F2; hp 14, 11 (×2); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 12; studded leather armor, club, dagger, short sword; XP 65 each.

Arwe is a notorious jewelry thief, and the army has posted a 100-gp reward for his capture. Each of his accomplices has a 25-gp reward posted for his arrest. The rewards can be collected at the army barracks. The officer on duty at the barracks will recognize Arwe and his accomplices, and will take them into custody without even questioning the PCs. The Volkrad army usually waits three weeks before paying rewards, just to make sure everything is in order. Longer delays are likely, given L'Trel's current disorderly condition.

If Arwe escapes from the PCs or escapes custody once the PCs have turned him over to the army, the DM could use him as a long-term nemesis for the PCs. He never forgets anyone who thwarts him.

Day 12

The PCs are on patrol near the theater (area 19) when they hear shouting several blocks away. As the patrol approaches the theater, the PCs see a group of 40 rioters shouting "Food! We want the food!" and trying to overwhelm the theater guards. If the PCs interfere, 10 rioters attack the PCs.

Rioters (10): AL N; AC 10; MV 12; F2 (×2), F1 (×5), zero-level humans (×3); hp 11 (×2), 5 (×5), 4 (×3); THAC0 19 (×2), 20 (×8); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 13; XP 15 each. Each of the rioters has either a club (30%) or a short sword (70%). All of the rioters have a −1 penalty to attack rolls because of their hunger-induced weakness.

The 30 remaining rioters (with statistics similar to those shown above) continue to attack the three six-man patrol units on guard duty at the theater. See area 2 for the guards' statistics. As the PCs defend themselves from the rioters, inform them that the other patrol units are also under attack.

The outcome of the overall battle depends on the result of the fight between the PCs and their attackers. If the PCs defeat the 10 rioters attacking them, the other soldiers also repel the crowds from the theater. In this case, the PCs (and the other patrol units) get letters of commendation from the army

Rumors

The PCs can hear the following rumors as they move through L'Trel on their patrols. The PCs should hear no more than four rumors in any one day. Rumor-spreading NPCs may include fellow soldiers, refugees, healers, fire-fighting crews, etc. Each NPC that the PCs approach knows 1-3 rumors. In all cases, the NPC believes the rumor to be true.

1. Undead are over-running L'Trel, including ghouls, ghasts, vampires, and ghosts. (False. No vampires or ghosts have moved in, but ghouls have.)

2. I saw a pack of giant rats dragging an unconscious young boy into the sewers. I tried to stop them, but they snarled and tried to bite me. They were very large and vicious. (True. This unfortunate soul witnessed an attack by a group of wererats.)

3. People have been disappearing in large numbers since the fire. The disappearances are obviously related to the undead. (Partially true. Slavers have been grabbing people, too.)

4. Dogs are running wild in the city. Some of them are starving and may be dangerous. (True.)

5. The fires are still burning in the pathetic remnants of the city's once-mighty shipyards. All the shipyards were destroyed, along with about 90% of the fishing fleet. (False. The shipyards were about 90% destroyed. It is true that 90% of the fishing fleet was destroyed, which will aggravate the food shortages in the coming months.)

6. The army high command is going to order L'Trel evacuated. (False.)

7. Many more people died in the fire than the army admits. (The exact number that the NPC claims varies from 100 to 10,000, depending on the NPC. Approximately 3,000 people died as a result of the fire. Several thousand more will die when the plagues take their toll. To add impact, the PCs should hear this rumor from several different sources, each quoting a different number of casualties.)

8. The fire did more than 1,000,000 gp worth of damage to L'Trel. (False. The damage was much higher.)

9. All of the city food stores were destroyed, and thousands more people will starve to death in the winter. (Three-quarters of the granaries were destroyed.)

10. The fire was punishment from the gods for L'Trel's wickedness. (False.)

11. The fire was caused by a mage's experiment gone awry. (This rumor is true simply by accident; no one really knows what started the fire. Other rumors attribute the fire to an attempt to assassinate a mage, a magical smithy fire, a freak lightning strike, and an attack by a vengeful fiend.)

12. The fire was a sign that L'Trel now belongs to [an evil god in the DM's campaign]. All must bow before his rule! (False. This rumor is shouted loudly by a wild-eyed, self-proclaimed prophet.)

13. The army has posted a 2,000-gp reward for information leading to the discovery of the cause of the explosion and the arrest of anyone involved. (True. This is a large reward, but the crime was great.)

14. The Shipmaker's Guild has posted a 3,000-gp reward for information leading to the discovery of the cause of the fire and the arrest of anyone involved. (False. The shipmakers will have a hard time recovering from the fire even without giving away money.)

15. Fire-fighting crews have been battling the fires for several days now, and blazes still keep popping up in apparently random areas of L'Trel. (True. See Day 24 for an encounter with Baernan the fire elemental.)

16. Some crazy people (perhaps members of one of the new fire-worshiping cults) are running around committing arson, purposely setting new fires. (True. The PCs hear this rumor from a tired, badly burned member of a fire-fighting crew.)

17. L'Trel is a plague city. Everyone is doomed to die! Unless, of course, you buy one of my special plague-warding charms. Yours for a mere 10 sp. What a bargain! (False. The plagues will take a heavy toll, but not everyone will die.)

18. Our god is with us! The spontaneous fires are proof! (False. Baernan the fire elemental (see page 24) is the cause of most of the spontaneous fires. The PCs hear this proclamation from a fire-god convert.)

19. Bands of evil cultists meet on dark nights in the heart of the Burnout district. (False, although the DM could easily run several encounters with evil cultists, in which case this rumor would be true.)

20. The city council is going to officially rename the devastated area "Burnout district." (False. The citizens of L'Trel will call it the Burnout district from now on, however.)

officer in charge of defending the theater. An especially effective PC may even get a promotion (DM's discretion). If the PCs retreat, assume that the rest of the patrol units also abandon their efforts to defend the theater. In this case, the rioters overwhelm the facility and take all the food.

Day 14

The rubble cools enough to allow infravision to function in the Burnout district, if the optional infravision rules are being used.

The people of L'Trel enjoyed keeping dogs as pets. In the aftermath of the fire, many dogs lost their masters and began to starve. As a result, the dogs started eating bodies. After the dead ran out, the packs of feral dogs started chasing rats, cats, humans, other dogs, and anything else they could catch.

While on patrol in the Burnout district, the PCs spot a pack of hungry dogs chasing a man and a woman. The two ragged-looking humans scream for help as they scramble past the PCs. If the PCs do not intervene, the dogs catch the two hapless humans in 1-3 rounds and quickly pull them to the ground.

Dogs, wild (1d10+10): INT semi; AL N; AC 7; MV 15; HD 1+1; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SZ S (3' long); ML 12; XP 35 each; MM/57. When a dog falls in combat, the two nearest dogs stop fighting and start devouring the corpse.

Jess and **Secare,** looters: AL N; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level humans; hp 5, 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 10; short sword.

Each looter has a bag of food scraps (1-3 days' worth of food) and a bag of gold coins and jewelry (each bag contains 1d100+100 gp worth of coins and assorted valuables).

Their looted gold weighed Jess and Secare down so much that they could not escape the dogs. The two looters vigorously claim that the gold belongs to them. In fact, Jess and Secare were looting and were surprised by the dogs. Astute PCs who check the jewelry for initials indicating ownership find a number of jewelry pieces with different initials. If the PCs discover the initials, Jess and Secare beg the PCs not to turn them in, claiming that they have small children to support (false). If the PCs seem adamant about turning them in, Jess and Secare offer to split the loot with the PCs in exchange for their freedom.

If the PCs arrest the looters and take them to the army barracks, the PCs will have to explain to an officer their grounds for arresting the looters. The differing initials on the jewelry are enough to convict Jess and Secare for looting. The DM should award a 25-XP bonus to each PC involved in the arrest.

Day 17

The DM should make sure that the PCs have heard rumors 10, 12, and 16 before running this encounter. This encounter occurs while the PCs are on patrol near Low Market (area 7), deep in the heart of the Halfburn district.

Many people were driven insane with grief as a result of the horrific destruction wrought by the fire. Some saw their homes and businesses burn to the ground, destroying life as they knew it. Others saw loved ones perish in the hungry flames. Many haven't recovered from their grief and still wander around in a stupor, mindlessly existing from day to day. They will die when desperation drives the other survivors of the fire to concentrate on their own survival.

A few people were affected in a different way. Jon was a young, successful politician with a large following, a lovely home, and a devoted family. He lost it all in the fire, and his mind snapped. Jon's warped intellect seized on the fire as the cause of all his troubles (which is true enough). He decided that since he can't beat the fire, he should join it. Jon worships the ravaging fire and has become a priest of a destructive fire-god. To complete his transition to his new life, Jon renamed himself "Torca," an old (possibly elven) word for "torch."

Torca retained the charismatic way of speaking that had attracted so many followers in his former life. Torca's persuasive nature and rhetorical skills have allowed him to attract a large following in a very short time. He tirelessly tramps through the misery-stricken back alleys of L'Trel, preaching his insane creed of fiery destruction. Torca incites his followers to put buildings, homes, and trees to the torch. Several of his followers have completely adopted the warped ideals that he spews forth and have also gained priestly powers from the fire-god. Torca and people like him are the source of the fire-cult rumors circulating in L'Trel.

The PCs meet Torca while he is delivering another of his "fiery" sermons to a crowd of 50 people. Fifteen of these are fire-god fanatics who obey Torca's every word, defending him with their lives if necessary. The rest are simply listening to Torca's sermon and will not interfere in any combat between the PCs and Torca unless they themselves are attacked. To begin this encounter, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> The rumors that you heard about fire cultists have turned out to be horribly true. Your patrol hides in a sheltering alleyway and watches a frightening spectacle unfold before you. In a nearby square, a ragged, ranting man in a badly burned smock screams a speech about fire and death to a crowd of fifty people. The man slowly waves a flickering torch to the rhythm of his speech; the hypnotic pattern of words and fire has mesmerized the crowd. With a screech, the man declares "The time of fire has come! Fall down and worship the untamed might of the fire!" A dozen people in the crowd shout with joy as the ragged man thrusts his torch at the tinder-dry roof of a building. Flames whoosh into the night sky as the building ignites with almost supernatural speed. With looks of devout admiration on their faces, the arsonist and his followers stare into the blaze and sway in unison. The leaping flames devour yet another piece of L'Trel.

Torca: AL CE; AC 10; MV 12; C1; hp 8; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 13, D 10, C 10, I 12, W 15, Ch 15; ML 15; XP 120; torch.

Spells: *cause light wounds, command, faerie fire.* Proficiencies: local history, read/write Common, elvish, fire-building.

As a member of the fire-god's clergy, Torca has the innate ability to *endure heat* as the spell, once per day. If he reaches 5th level, he will gain the ability to *resist fire* once per day. Torca's torch does 1-6 hp damage (treat as a club), plus 1-3 hp fire damage. In addition, if his target is carrying any flammable items (cloaks, clothing, scrolls), a saving throw vs. fire determines whether the items catch fire.

Fire-god converts (15): AL CN; AC 10; MV 12; HD F1 (×3), 0-level humans (×12); hp 7 (×3), 6 (×3), 5 (×3) 4 (×3), 3 (×3); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 15; XP 15 each. Each fire-god convert has either a club, dagger, short sword, or torch.

People in crowd (35): AL any N or G; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level humans; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 10. Each person carries either a club, dagger, or short sword.

The PCs are in a dangerous situation because they are heavily outnumbered. If the heroes simply wade into the crowd and try to arrest (or kill) Torca, the fanatics will tear them apart, regardless of the PCs' army uniforms. At the DM's option, the fanatics may try to overbear the PCs. In a mob, overbearing is deadly (see *DMG,* page 60). When overbearing, at least two fanatics attack each PC.

The PCs can defend themselves against overbearing with their weapons, though each defender can fend off only one opponent. If two fanatics attack a PC, and the PC hits one of them, the other fanatic may still overbear.

Once the fanatics have a PC pinned, they hold him down while others attack with weapons. The weapon-wielding fanatics get a bonus of +4 to attack and damage rolls against held opponents.

The fanatics try to prevent the PCs from putting out the building fire, and are willing to sacrifice themselves if it means they can drag a PC with them into the flames. Anyone in the flames suffer 3d6 hp damage per round of exposure to the fire.

The PCs will have to be inventive to capture Torca. A bard may be able to sway the noncultists in the crowd over to the PCs' side, or the PCs may be able to find reinforcements.

The PCs may have to settle for reporting Torca's deeds and description to Lieutenant L'Roi (their superior officer). Unless they defeat Torca, however, the PCs can encounter him again. One possible future adventure might deal with the PCs trying to go undercover and infiltrate Torca's followers. If the PCs succeed, they might be able to kill or capture the mad priest. Torca has almost reached 2nd level. If he remains at large for much longer, he will continue to gain levels rapidly.

Day 21

L'Trel's current state presents an ideal opportunity for slave-raiders to ply their trade. Slavery is illegal in the nation of Volkrad, but that does not stop other nations from raiding here. Capere, the slaver cleric described below, entered

L'Trel posing as a merchant from a country friendly to Volkrad. Capere's disguise allows him to spirit away a few people a year, to be sold into slavery in his homeland. Some of the mercenaries with him are bodyguards from his native land, and a few are blackguard mercenaries hired from the darker streets of L'Trel.

While the PCs are on patrol through the Riverside district of L'Trel (near area 20, in the Halfburn district), they encounter Capere and his evil band. The slavers are posing as members of the Volkrad army. They have captured 10 ragged and scruffy people, all of whom are bound and gagged. If questioned, Capere (who is posing as a first lieutenant) says that the people were caught looting, and that a wagon is coming soon to take them in for questioning and eventual judgment.

There are a few clues that all is not right with this scene. The slavers wear remarkably clean uniforms that are similar to the PCs' own filthy, sooty, and unwashed uniforms. However, if a PC asks about the uniforms, roll a tailoring or heraldry nonweapon proficiency check. If the check is successful, inform the PC that 1) the cut of the other group's uniforms is not quite the same as the cut of any of the uniforms the PCs are wearing, and 2) all of the other group's uniforms fit—a rare occurrence. A further oddity is that all the supposed soldiers are using long swords; the standard issue weapon of the Volkrad army is the short sword. It is not unusual for a few soldiers in a unit to use long swords, especially officers. An entire unit armed with long swords, however, is unusual.

If the PCs look carefully at the 10 "looters," they discover someone they know. It may be M'Tilda, from the "Confusion and Catastrophe" section of this adventure, or another NPC the PCs have had some friendly interaction with in the past. The NPC should be one that the PCs know would not stoop to looting under any circumstances.

Capere: AL LE; AC 7; MV 9; C4; hp 20; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 11, D 10, C 12, I 10, W 15, Ch 14; ML 13; XP 270; studded leather armor, long sword, barbed whip, dagger. Spells: *cause fear, cure light wounds, detect magic, detect poison, light; augury, chant, hold person.*

Capere is also carrying his unholy symbol, a gold necklace worth 10 gp, and 8 gp.

Slavers (5): AL LE; AC 6; MV 9; F2, F1 (×4); hp 17, 7 (×4); THAC0 19, 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 12; XP 120, 65 (×4); studded leather armor, shield, long sword, dagger, light crossbow, net. Each slaver wears a fake army uniform and carries 1-6 cp, 1-4 sp, and 1-3 gp.

Captives (10): AL any N or G; AC 10; MV 12; F1 (×6), 0-level human (×4); hp 8, 6 (×4), 4 (×5); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (unarmed); ML 10.

If fighting occurs, the captives frantically wiggle and thrash around in an attempt to work free of their bonds. None of the captives can break free unaided, but a PC with a knife can free one captive per round.

Once freed, the captives angrily attack the slavers, using their bare fists if necessary, or with weapons if the PCs provide them. The captives have a −2 penalty on all attack and damage rolls for three rounds after they are freed, because the tight ropes and bindings have numbed their arms.

If fighting occurs, the slavers try to prevent the PCs from freeing any of the captives. If the fight goes badly for the slavers, they grab a few of the still-bound captives and threaten to kill them if the PCs attack.

There is a reward of 10 gp for each slaver captured alive, and a 150-gp reward for capturing Capere alive, if the PCs can provide evidence against them. The Volkrad army court will question a few of the rescued slaves using *detect lie* spells, which should provide proof of the slaver's intentions. Careful examination of the uniforms by army quartermasters will reveal that the uniforms are clever fakes. If convicted, Capere will be hanged, and his hirelings will be sentenced to life at hard labor. Volkrad is especially harsh on captured slavers.

This encounter can lead to many further adventures. Capere may have allies planning a jailbreak the night before the scheduled hanging. Even if Capere is executed, the PCs should realize that the slavers had to be taking the captives somewhere. If the DM wishes to pursue this story line, the PCs must be provided with a clue. The slaver cleric may have been carrying a map indicating a rendezvous point, or one of the captives may have overheard the slavers mention that they were going to meet a ship at a particular place and time.

Award 35 XP for each captive rescued from the slavers, to be split between the PCs involved.

Day 24

L'Trel's volunteer fire-fighting crews battle valiantly to control the rampaging blazes, and they eventually bring the main fires under control. But mysterious small fires still keep popping up all over the city, as mentioned in the "Rumors" sidebar. The PCs should hear rumors 11, 13, 15, and 16 (from different NPCs) before this encounter, which occurs in the Halfburn district on the east side of the Reach River (near area 21).

The pestilential small fires are being set by a tiny fire elemental named Baernan. Baernan was bound to Kaustos' service as the heat source for the mage's cooking stove, and he escaped during the explosion. The little fire elemental was a bit upset (well, perhaps more than a bit) about being used as a stove, so he decided to stick around and light a few fires as a form of revenge. Low-level PCs probably cannot win a fight with Baernan, so the adventurers' task is to persuade him to stop setting fires in the city and to leave the Prime Material plane.

Baernan, fire elemental: INT low; AL N; AC 2; MV 12; HD 4; hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-12; SA heat; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; SZ T (1′ tall); ML 15; XP 420; MM/100 (modified).

Baernan appears as a miniature man with fiery-red skin. His outline constantly flickers and wavers, much like a candle flame. A large bucket of cold water inflicts 1 hp damage on Baernan, but the cold-water treatment cannot bring him below 1 hp.

To begin the encounter with Baernan, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> The patrols have been pretty uneventful for the last few days, but that appears to have changed. Up ahead, you see flames leaping up from a rapidly burning house. Twenty or 30 people have formed a bucket line between the river and the house, but it looks like they could use some help.

If the PCs opt not to help the NPCs put out the fire, the encounter ends here. Most PCs should want to help, since one of their duties is to help extinguish the fires.

If the PCs help put out the fire, each

player should roll 1d10. Read or paraphrase the following to the player with the lowest result.

> You've been carrying buckets back and forth for at least 10 minutes, and it appears that you and your compatriots are not going to be able to put out the fire. No matter how much water you pour on the flames, they just keep roaring back. You've never seen such a tenacious blaze.
>
> Suddenly, out of the corner of your eye, you see an odd movement. You rub your eyes in disbelief, thinking that perhaps you are hallucinating, but the sight stubbornly remains. A small humanoid, no more than 1' tall, is dancing around in the flames!
>
> Now that you've spotted him, it's easy to follow his movements. Every time one of the fire fighters dumps a bucket of water on the flames, the little fire-man runs over and dances on the spot. As he dances, flames jet forth from his body and ignite the fires again. No wonder the cursed fire won't go out!

Baernan wants to brag about his deeds (to boost his ego), so if the PCs make it obvious they have spotted him (shouting at him, throwing a bucket of water directly on him, etc.), he swaggers out of the burning house and exclaims, "Yeah, what do you want, water-bag?" His speech patterns are reminiscent of an overly cocky youth's. Baernan apparently wants to talk, and he is not hostile unless the PCs continue to throw water on him.

The following is offered as an example of how a conversation between Baernan and the PCs might proceed.

Where did you come from? "I was summoned by that bumbling fool of a mage, Kaustos."

How did you get free? "I'm not sure. There was a big explosion. Flames were everywhere, and the rune-circle I was trapped in weakened and I was able to escape."

Why are you still here? "I'm reaping my revenge! I'll show the rest of those damn-blasted mages to lock me up and use me as a stove! Er, I mean, as the main heat source for a lab! Yeah, that's it. I was the main heat source for his lab!"

Once the PCs know that Baernan was employed by Kaustos as a stove, they can use this information against him. Baernan is highly embarrassed at having been used as a stove, because it was such a menial task. Having everyone know that he was a stove would be an unbearable blow to the little fire-elemental's self-esteem and towering ego.

Cleverly worded conversation may convince Baernan to return to his own plane: "If you don't go home, we'll tell everyone that you were captured by a bumbling fool of a mage and forced to be his stove! Not that there's anything wrong with being a stove. I mean, its a perfectly honest occupation (snigger), really. I can imagine that many a young fire-elemental dreams of growing up to be a stove. A very respected (snigger) line of work, stoving. Really. (Snigger)."

If the PCs use the revelation of his former occupation as a threat, Baernan begs the PCs not to tell anyone. The fire elemental agrees to leave the Prime Material plane if the PCs promise not to tell of his "shameful past." If the PCs speak with Baernan and get him to return to his home plane, award a 2,500-XP bonus, to be split between the PCs.

Antagonizing Baernan makes him so belligerent that he lights even more fires. If the PCs tell anyone about their conversation with Baernan, the tale is greeted with polite skepticism. If the PCs cannot convince Baernan to leave, they may encounter him again in the next few days.

Talking to Baernan may provide the PCs with a lead to Kaustos as the cause of the explosion. If the PCs are good detectives, they may be able to find more clues: Kaustos filed a building permit with the city for the tank, a PC mage could find a member of the mage's guild who knew Kaustos, etc. Eventually, clever PCs may be able to determine who caused the explosion, and how. If so, the PCs can claim the 2,000-gp reward posted by the army. If the PCs decide to hunt down the cause of the explosion, the DM should be prepared to think quickly. Solving the mystery should be extremely difficult, but not impossible.

Conclusions and Continuations

Before the fire, L'Trel had a population of about 19,000. More than 3,000 people die in the fire or in its immediate aftermath. Several weeks after the fire, food shortages and plagues set in. L'Trel is able to get partial relief from the food shortage by careful rationing, fishing, and importing food from small communities nearby. However, L'Trel's priests and healers are unable to cope with the sheer numbers afflicted by the plagues, and several thousand more die as a result. A few thousand flee the city.

By the next spring (six months after the fire), only about 10,000 people are left in L'Trel to begin the process of rebuilding. Fortunately, by that time L'Trel gets help from the government of Volkrad. In the spring, the rescue effort begins in earnest, and food and supplies start pouring into the city. The state of martial law in L'Trel is rescinded in late spring (nine months after the fire). Food prices take at least a year to stabilize at a reasonable level. It might well be years before all of the buildings are repaired and business returns to its pre-fire level.

Although the "On Patrol" section details only 24 days, the DM is free to make up more encounters to cover the remainder of the PCs' tour of duty. For example, the adventurers may be called out to quell ever-more violent food riots. Or they may have an encounter with a group of plague victims. Those pesky wererats are sure to become more and more of a problem, and Torca was not the only priest of the mad fire god. The PCs are free to leave the army (with an honorable discharge) at any time after they have completed three months of service. Award a 200-XP bonus to each PC who completes the tour of duty. At the DM's option, the army could ask the PCs to re-enlist after the first three months.

The period of time from the beginning of the fire until L'Trel fully recovers is a fertile field for further adventures. Indeed, a whole campaign can be based on L'Trel's future, which is bound to be grim and dark, at least for the next several years. Many adventures could be set during L'Trel's reconstruction period. Plots may revolve around the slavers and evil cults that are sure to flourish in the chaos. The PCs could have a real struggle to stamp out these foul practices. DUNGEON Magazine has published examples of evil cults that could spring up in the horrific aftermath of the fire, such as the cult of Shami-Amorae, outlined in "The Stolen Power" (issue #5), and the cult of Imbindarla outlined in "The Pit" (issue #17). Finally, ghouls, ghasts, and even more fearsome forms of undead will roam the streets of L'Trel at night, feeding on and contributing to the widespread chaos and misery. Ω

THE HAND OF AL-DJAMAL

BY STEPHEN J. SMITH

The exhibition of Ylari relics is temporarily closed.

Artwork by Scott Rosema

Stephen Smith has had adventures published many times in DUNGEON® Adventures, so he suggested we include a brief profile of the artist who illustrated this adventure.

Scott Rosema started reading and drawing comics at age 7. When he was 12, he read the Iliad *and the* Odyssey, *and these heroic myths captured his imagination. After art college, he worked 13 years as a professional illustrator. Scott's current work includes comic and gaming projects.*

"The Hand of Al-Djamal" is a Challenger-level DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game module designed for a party of 4-6 player characters, levels 9-12 (about 50 total levels). The PC party should be well balanced, including one or two magic-users or elves and at least one cleric. Because of this module's setting, dwarves and halflings may choose to avoid this quest.

This adventure is set in the Principalities of Glantri in the D&D® game's Known World (see the *Rules Cyclopedia*, pages 269-273, for an outline and maps of this nation, or accessory GAZ 3 for full details).

This realm is a magocracy ruled by a council of wizard-princes. PC dwarves and halflings might hesitate to adventure in this land, as it is rumored that the wizards of Glantri sometimes abduct such demihuman visitors for use in magical experiments (the mages believe that the short folk are naturally resistant to magic). Also, dwarven immigrants to Glantri were blamed for a severe outbreak of the plague about 200 years ago, and the short bearded folk have not been welcome in the country since.

Clerics, too, might be hesitant to adventure in this setting. Glantri is infamous for its intolerance of foreign religions, and clerics found within its borders were once subjected to immediate execution. Recent events have made Glantri more hospitable to traveling priests, however. In the midst of the recently concluded war between Glantri (with its ally Thyatis) and Alphatia (a conflict detailed in the *Wrath of the Immortals* boxed set), a killer plague swept through the Principalities, forcing the ruling council to rescind the "no clerics" ban and import some priests from nearby Darokin to battle the deadly epidemic. The rampaging plague has since been halted, but the Glantrian

nobility has not yet reinstated its ban on clerics, so PC priests may participate in this adventure without fear of prompt execution.

The DM should also be aware that PCs who are natives of the Emirates of Ylaruam (RC/269, GAZ 2) present a potential problem for smoothly running this scenario. While a party containing a lone Ylari PC can undertake this adventure with minimal damage to the story line, parties containing multiple Ylari will not even be hired for the mission. The DM should consult the "For the Dungeon Master" section of the module for details of this "Ylari problem" and possible solutions to it.

This adventure takes place in the fall or winter of the year AC 1010 and is linked to an event detailed in the *Poor Wizard's Almanac*: the discovery of the tomb of the ancient Nithian queen Nennaya-Sherat (see the entries on pages 165, 202, and 211-212). DMs who don't own this accessory needn't worry; the relevant details of the Nennaya-Sherat story are provided in this module.

Adventure Background

The PCs should be gathered in Glantri City at the start of play. They may be in town to visit friends or family, or perhaps they have been lured to the area by rumors of rampaging monsters or legendary treasures (or whatever other effective lead-in the DM can concoct).

Wherever the PCs are staying in the city, they are approached early one morning by a messenger sent by Glaundro Valkner, curator and owner of Valkner's Museum of Worldly Wonders. This messenger, a man named Jonas Kettler, asks the heroes to accompany him to the museum for an urgent meeting with Mr. Valkner. Jonas refuses to disclose the subject of this meeting, but PCs who use an *ESP* spell or *medallion of ESP* to probe Kettler's mind may learn that Valkner wants to hire the PCs to find out who murdered his museum watchmen last night.

Jonas Kettler: AC 9; HD 1−1; hp 6; THAC0 20; MV 120′ (40′); #AT 1 dagger; Dmg by weapon type (dagger 1-4 hp); Save NM; ML 6; AL L; RC/197.

Glantri City is a bit unusual in that most of its thoroughfares are filled with water. There are few streets; instead, the city boasts a network of beautiful canals that link its various neighborhoods. Jonas has a large, comfortable gondola waiting outside for the PCs and can transport them to Valkner's museum whenever they're ready. If the DM is running this adventure in the autumn, Jonas simply poles the PCs to their destination. If it's winter, the city canals are frozen, so the gondola has ski-like rails attached to its bottom and is hitched to a team of sled dogs.

If the adventurers accept the mysterious summons, Jonas pilots them into the city's Entertainers' Quarter (see the accompanying map) and stops in front of the museum. Inside the stately stone building, the PCs are greeted by Glaundro Valkner (see sidebar). The curator leads the PCs to a private room, closes the door behind them, and prepares to brief the heroes on the mission. The DM should be aware that Valkner's tale contains a number of lies and half-truths (see "For the Dungeon Master" for the real story).

Valkner begins by thanking the PCs for answering his summons. He claims to need adventurers to perform an important task, and he flatters the PCs by mentioning that he has heard stories of

Glaundro Valkner
6th-level Magic-User

Glaundro Valkner: AC 4 (2 vs. missile attacks); M6; hp 24; THAC0 17 (15 with *dagger +2*); MV 120′ (40′); #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; Save M6; ML 7; AL N; XP 725; S 10, I 17, W 15, D 13, C 13, Ch 12; *dagger +2, wand of teleporting* (13 charges), *amulet of shielding, bag of holding, crystal ball with clairaudience.*

Spells: *analyze, detect magic; ESP, invisibility; dispel magic, lightning bolt.* The *wand of teleporting* and the *amulet of shielding* are new magical items detailed at the end of this sidebar.

Valkner keeps his *crystal ball* and magical bag at his home in the most affluent section of Glantri City's Middle-Class Quarter.

Glaundro Valkner, age 43, stands 6'3" tall, weighs 175 lbs., and has black hair and a moustache, both of which are lengthy and streaked with gray. He wears expensive, stylish clothing (not the robes typical of some magic-users) complete with shiny black boots and a wide-brimmed hat decorated with large, colorful feathers. The curator's facial expression is usually pleasant, though not exactly what one might term warm or friendly.

Because he is a wealthy spell-caster who has dealings with Glantri's highest nobility, Glaundro has acquired an aristocratic air (some would deem him snobbish). Nonetheless, the museum curator treats most acquaintances with fairness and respect (if not quite equality).

Valkner routinely hires adventurers to accompany him on his various expeditions in search of new artifacts for his museum, so he knew who to hire when confronted with his mummy problem. He has become accustomed to hiring others to do tasks he doesn't particularly care to do himself—dangerous ones especially. Glaundro considers himself pragmatic in this regard, but others might label him cowardly.

Lastly, Valkner has a deep passion for history and related sciences (such as anthropology, archeology, etc.) and lives only to collect rare and wondrous items for his museum. This fanatical devotion to his museum sometimes clouds the man's moral conduct, as witnessed by Glaundro's theft of the Ylari artifacts from the tomb of Nennaya-Sherat.

Amulet of Shielding

This amulet gives its wearer the same protection afforded by the first-level magic-user/elf spell *shield.* This protection is continuous and lasts as long as the amulet is worn. It gives its wearer an armor-class rating of 4 against melee attacks and AC 2 against missile attacks. The wearer of this magical item is also entitled to a Saving Throw vs. Spells to prevent damage from *magic missile* attacks (as per the *shield* spell description, RC/45). The amulet cannot be used in conjunction with physical armor or shields.

Wand of Teleporting

This wand creates the same effect as the seventh-level magic-user/elf spell *teleport any object.* The wand's *teleporting* effects are subject to the same limitations as the aforementioned spell (see RC/56).

Glantri City Entertainers' Quarter

22. Temple of Rad
27. Watergates
35. Metropolitan Theatre
36. Game Lizards, Inc.
37. The Watertower Inn
38. Fireworks Arcane House
39. The Golden Imp
40. Hostelry of the Unicorn
41. Shurav Orlovski's Tenement
42. Lou Garou's Fries
43. United Artists' Guild
44. Mages' Hostelry
69. Guard Post

See GAZ3 *The Principalities of Glantri*, pages 41-47, for descriptions of these areas.

the PCs' prowess. He will not detail the "important task," however, unless all the PCs vow to keep secret what he is about to tell them. Almost as an aside, he warns the heroes that he has the resources at his disposal to retaliate forcefully if the PCs breach his confidence. Indeed, several Glantrian wizard-nobles finance Glaundro's displays and expeditions, and would lend their assistance to the curator should the PCs attempt to blackmail Valkner. One such benefactor is the paranoid, murderous ex-Prince Innocenti di Malapietra (see GAZ 3, page 26), whose principality was destroyed in a catastrophic meteor strike during the Glantri/Alphatia war.

If the PCs take the oath, Glaundro details their mission:

> "When I arrived at the museum this morning, I discovered the two night watchmen dead. Strangled. I have hesitated to inform the local constabulary of the murders because . . . well, it would never do to have the public find out that my museum's exhibits are running around killing people."

Seeing the looks of confusion brought on by his strange statement, the curator quickly explains himself.

"Our newest exhibit here at Valkner's Museum of Worldly Wonders is a collection of amazing artifacts recovered from the tomb of an ancient noble from the desert lands of Ylaruam to the east. My expedition brought back several gold urns, jeweled scepters, and other rather valuable trinkets, but the real gems we recovered were a pair of ornately decorated sarcophagi. Within these extravagant coffins we discovered the mummified remains of two Ylari warriors, and these fellows became the centerpiece of my exhibit.

"I believe, ladies and gentlemen, that these mummies are the perpetrators of last night's homicides. I base this conjecture on a discovery I made this morning."

Holding up a thin strip of brownish-white cloth, the curator announces, "I found this snagged on the corner of a table near the Ylari exhibit." As if reading your minds, the man adds, "Yes, it's a piece of mummy wrapping."

Curator Valkner offers the PCs 500 gp each to dispose of the killer mummies. If the PC party includes one or more clerics capable of casting *raise dead* spells, Valkner offers a bonus of 2,000 gp to bring his guards back from death.

Although the curator would like the PCs to simply accept his offer and destroy the mummies—no questions asked—the PCs might wish to ask a few questions first. A few likely questions and Valkner's answers are provided below.

Where in Ylaruam did you find the noble's tomb? Did you also recover the noble's body and sarcophagus? "My men excavated a site in the foothills northwest of the town of Deraan in north central Ylaruam, in the Emirate of Alasiya I believe. The local emir claimed the noble's body and sarcophagus—and most of the golden valuables we uncovered, for that matter—but allowed us to bring the mummified warriors, their sarcophagi, and a few less valuable artifacts back to my museum."

Why would you bring "live" mummies into the city? "Before bringing the mummies into the city, I tested them with a

barrage of detection spells: *detect magic, detect evil,* and the like. Nothing registered. I'm sure these were typical corpses."

If the mummies were "dead," then how could they kill the guards? "That's another story." The DM should tell the players the story of the Ylari thief Al-Djamal as presented in the following section, omitting details such as the actual origins of Valkner's artifacts. The curator characterizes Al-Djamal as an unreasonable, slightly crazed foreigner.

Valkner's theory regarding the mummies can easily be verified or disproved by using a *speak with the dead* spell on either of the deceased guards or by *raising* the men from the dead. In either case, the guards claim to have heard a disturbance in the vicinity of the Ylari exhibit. Upon investigating, they found the two sarcophagi standing open and empty; immediately thereafter, the men were attacked and eventually throttled by the mummies.

For the Dungeon Master™

Glaundro is correct in his suspicion that the Ylari mummies killed his guards. Unfortunately for both the curator and his hired heroes, however, the mummies are merely the pawns of a greater undead malevolence.

The source of Valkner's mummy problem can be traced to an expedition the curator made to Ylaruam in the latter months of the year AC 1009. The objective of this expedition was to excavate a suspected tomb site in the foothills northeast of the town of Cinsa-Men-Noo in the Emirate of Nithia (not Deraan in the Emirate of Alasiya, as Glaundro told the PCs). After obtaining all the necessary permits, Valkner's team of archeological explorers, in conjunction with a group of native Ylari cleric-scholars, began excavating the site. The two parties had made a prior agreement: the Ylari scholars would keep all major finds of historical or monetary value while the curator would get a selection of lesser artifacts for display in his museum.

When the excavators broke into the burial chamber of the Nithian queen Nennaya-Sherat on the 3rd of Nuwmont, AC 1010, the terms of the original agreement were instantly changed. Agents from the Vouchery of the Province (a department of the bureaucratic Ylari government charged with overseeing all activities in the wilderness regions of Ylaruam, especially tomb excavations) swiftly stepped in and declared the find of such historical importance that all of the tomb's artifacts belonged exclusively to the local emir. Valkner was rudely told to go back to Glantri empty handed.

Although he found this treatment to be grossly unfair, the curator ordered his assistants to return to Glantri. Valkner himself secretly remained at the excavation site, using his spell-casting ability to explore the queen's tomb surreptitiously at night after the Ylari had retired.

Following a week of this nightly reconnaissance, Glaundro pilfered several minor artifacts and placed them in a *bag of holding* he carried. Next he used his most prized possession, a *wand of teleporting*, to transport the mummy-laden sarcophagi of two "unimportant" Ylari warriors back to his museum. With his work accomplished, he *teleported* home.

The curator made it a point not to take anything that might have been of great value to the Ylari people (like the queen's jewels or scepter, for example) and honestly believes that he took only as many artifacts as he deserved under the terms of the original deal. Valkner does not consider his means of acquiring the Ylari artifacts as theft, though he realizes that the Ylari government is most unlikely to agree with him on this point. Still, once he got back to his beloved museum in Glantri City—over 400 miles northwest of Ylaruam—Glaundro felt sufficiently safe from the Ylari authorities.

Thus, six days ago when a Ylari native named Al-Djamal entered the museum and informed Valkner that he could not be allowed to keep his Ylari exhibit on display, the curator's heart nearly stopped beating. He had been discovered!

As Al-Djamal continued his rantings, however, Valkner realized that the man was talking in generalities about the immorality of raiding graves for profit and didn't know the origins of the curator's collection of relics. Much relieved, Glaundro tried to point out the historical and anthropological value of the excavated relics to mankind, but when Al-Djamal threatened him with physical violence if he did not remove the Ylari exhibit from public display, Valkner had the desert man thrown out of the museum.

That night, Al-Djamal broke into the museum and was caught by Valkner's night watchmen in the act of stuffing several of the smaller Ylari artifacts into a sack. Under Glantrian law, theft is punishable by the removal of one finger per 100 gp of merchandise stolen, and getting caught red-handed with a bag full of priceless artifacts left Mr. Al-Djamal in a rather unfavorable position. The Ylari native certainly didn't help his cause at the trial when he began to shout out the virtues of Al-Kalim (the patron Immortal of Ylaruam) while heaping derogatory remarks upon Rad (Glantri's most revered Immortal).

Three days after Al-Djamal's arrest, the local magistrate's sentence was handed down. In what he called a "gesture of goodwill to our foreign guest," the magistrate generously decreed that only five of the man's fingers were to be severed for his misdeeds. Then with a smile, he ordered the fingers to be removed at the wrist.

Al-Djamal's sentence was carried out the following morning. As he slowly bled to death, the man hurled a final curse in his own tongue at those present at the grisly spectacle. The dying man's curse of revenge against his killers was heard by Thanatos, one of the most powerful Immortals in the Sphere of Entropy. Thanatos returned Al-Djamal's raging spirit from death to inhabit the severed hand of his old mortal body.

As a hand druj (see RC/207), the dark side of Al-Djamal's spirit pursues revenge against his murderers and the despoilers of the Ylari noble's tomb while serving Thanatos's ultimate purpose: the spreading of death and destruction. The entropic Immortal has also granted Al-Djamal's spirit special power to animate the two mummies from Valkner's Ylari exhibit to assist in its vengeance (see the "Hand Druj" sidebar and "The Final Confrontation" for additional details of this power). The hand druj is a very powerful and complex monster. The DM should read the sidebar detailing this spirit and its abilities before trying to run this adventure.

Problems: Ylari PCs and Valkner's Morals

Because of the dubious manner in which the curator obtained his Ylari artifacts and the wild fiasco following the visit of the unfortunate Mr. Al-

Djamal, Valkner is leery of hiring PCs who are obviously of Ylari descent. If the PC party includes a lone Ylari, Valkner will still hire the group but keeps tabs on the Ylari PC using *ESP* spells and a *crystal ball with clairaudience* that he keeps at his home. Parties including multiple Ylari PCs are too much of a threat to Valkner, and the curator simply won't hire them for this mission.

With a little work, however, an enterprising DM could turn Valkner's refusal to hire the PCs into an adventure itself. Such a scenario should run more or less along the following guidelines, with Valkner as the main antagonist:

1. The PCs receive and answer Valkner's summons. Upon reaching the museum, the party is met by the curator who takes one look at them and, spotting the Ylari PCs, says "Oh, I'm sorry. I've already hired someone else for the job." Valkner can even throw dirty looks at the Ylari heroes if the DM so desires.

2. If the heroes decide to investigate the reason for Valkner's strange (or downright rude) behavior, they might learn the particulars of the Al-Djamal incident from any decent source of gossip (an innkeeper, tavern patron, or canal-side entertainment troupe member). If the PCs pay the entrance fee and begin to examine the Ylari exhibit in any detail, Valkner uses his *ESP* spells and *crystal ball with clairaudience* to spy on the party and learn the extent of their inquisitiveness (or knowledge) about the origin of his Ylari artifacts.

3. If the PCs seem close to discovering that his artifacts are in fact stolen (or if the PCs simply don't seem to be going away), the curator might hire assassins from the Glantri City Thugs' Guild (GAZ 3, page 37) to eliminate the snooping adventurers. The DM should decide the number and hit dice of the thugs, making the encounter challenging but not necessarily lethal for the PCs.

4. If the PCs survive the thug assault, some kind of showdown with Valkner should follow. When the PCs confront Valkner, the curator tells them the whole truth about how he acquired the tomb artifacts. Glaundro will offer each PC 1,000 gp to remain silent. If the PCs refuse to be bribed, the curator is likely to use his magic wand to *teleport* to the Thugs' Guild and ask for a better set of assassins to deal with the persistent pests that hound him.

Hand Druj

Armor Class: −4
Hit Dice: 14****
Hit Points: 60
Move: 90' (30')
THAC0: 8
Attacks: up to 4, see below
Damage: See below
Save As: F14
Morale: 11
Intelligence: 14
Alignment: Chaotic
XP Value: 5,500
Reference: RC/207

Monster Type: Undead, Enchanted (Very Rare).

The hand druj appears to be a human hand severed at the wrist. It shrivels and turns black as it slowly continues to decay. The hand's primary means of movement is magical flight, but it can also crawl about on its fingertips in a grotesque spiderlike manner at the rate of 30' per turn (10' per round).

A druj is a type of spirit, an undead entity that inhabits the body (or body part) of another. Like all spirits, a druj becomes *invisible* and nearly powerless at dawn but regains its strength once the sun has set. This type of undead is extremely powerful and has a number of special defenses and attack forms. It cannot be hurt by weapons of less than +2 enchantment and is immune to all first- to third-level spells. A druj can automatically sense *invisible* creatures (treat as a permanent *detect invisible* spell).

A druj is highly poisonous, and its very essence contaminates all consumable items (including normal and iron rations, normal and holy water, and even magical potions) brought within 30' of the spirit. Spoiled goods are rendered useless but not poisonous. Similarly, all living plants and small insects within 30' of a spirit are immediately paralyzed by the being's unholy aura and will perish if the spirit remains stationary for more than an hour. As a result, a druj is unaffected by *plant control* and *insect plague* spells.

As one can plainly see, a druj is formidable merely moving from place to place. When it goes on the offensive, the spirit becomes a truly awesome opponent. A hand druj can attack its victims either physically or with a variety of spell-like powers (or in both ways, when it splits its essence; see below).

A hand druj attacks by grabbing hold of its intended victim (usually around the throat) and squeezing the life out of its prey. The initial grab inflicts 1-4 hp damage. In subsequent rounds, damage is equal to the victim's armor class (ignoring Dexterity and shield bonuses) plus 1-4 additional points. In the case of a negative armor-class rating, the stranglehold causes only 1-4 hp damage per round. In truth, few individuals die from the druj's strangling hold; they perish from the spirit's deadly poisonous touch. For each round spent in a hand druj's death grip, the victim must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Poison or die instantly. The DM may allow PCs to make a Strength check each round to break free from the druj's grasp (in place of an Attack Roll or other action).

Instead of a physical attack, a druj can create any of the following clerical spell effects at will once per round (as if a 16th-level cleric): *darkness, silence 15' radius, cause disease, animate dead,* and *finger of death* (the reversed form of *raise dead*). This particular druj's *animate dead* power is unique in that it can be used only on mummified corpses; the entropic Immortal Thanatos wanted the spirit to have some special minions to assist in its destructive rampage, and Valkner's mummies seemed to be the perfect candidates for the job. Besides, mummies are favored minions of Thanatos, as the evil Immortal himself often takes the form of a winged mummy wearing black robes and carrying a wicked scythe. The druj can animate up to two lifeless mummies per round using this ability (see "The Final Confrontation" for more details regarding this power).

Once per night the druj can split itself into four identical essences. Typically, three of the hand spirits attack with their deadly poisonous touch while the fourth druj essence attacks from a distance with spells. If the spell-casting essence is slain, one of the surviving essences immediately inherits this magical power. Each of the four essences has the full hit-point total of the original druj. Because a druj can split itself only once per night, a divided druj usually refrains from re-uniting its essences until the following dawn.

The hand druj may be Turned normally by a cleric if it has not yet split its essence. If the spirit has already divided

itself, a successful Turning attempt reunites the druj essences for 1d4 + 1 rounds; subsequent Turning attempts and results are handled normally.

The dividing/reuniting aspect of a druj creates some rules problems (especially in regard to the spirit's hit-point total). Some practical rules are provided below to address these problems. Each rule is followed by descriptive examples.

1. When a druj splits its essence, each essence has the same game statistics as the original druj, with the same hit-point total as the original druj had at the moment of splitting.

Example: The hand druj in this adventure has 60 hp. When it splits, it creates four identical essences with 60 hp each. If this druj were hit for 10 hp damage prior to splitting, each of its essences would have only 50 hp. The druj can use healing magic to raise an essence's hp total to the original 60 points, however. See "The Final Confrontation" for more details on the spirit's ability to heal itself.

2. If a divided druj's essences are forced to reunite through clerical Turning, add the hit-point totals of all the essences and divide by the number of essences the PCs have been battling (initially four, but possibly fewer if the druj is forced to reunite more than once; see the note at Rule 3). Round any fraction to the nearest whole number. The result is the new hit-point total of the reunited druj.

Example: The 60-hp druj has split into four essences with 60 hp each. One essence is hit and reduced to 50 hp, the second is down to 30 hp, the third has 20 hp, and the fourth is slain. The party cleric successfully Turns the spirit, forcing it to reunite its essences. Adding the four essences' hit-point totals we get 100 (50 + 30 + 20 + 0). Dividing this total by four (the number of essences the PCs were fighting prior to the druj's recombining), we get 25. The reunited druj now has 25 hp.

3. When the duration of the forced reunion of a druj's essences expires, the spirit will again divide itself. Each surviving essence has the same number of hp as the pre-split druj (as per Rule 1). Any essence previously reduced to 0 hp does not reappear that night.

Example: The druj in the example following Rule 2 must reunite for 1d4 + 1 rounds and has 25 hp. Let's assume that the PCs fail to injure the spirit further while its essences are reunited. When the duration of the forced recombining ends, the druj again splits itself (into three 25-hp essences; the essence that the PCs reduced to zero hit points is temporarily eliminated).

4. Healing magic cast on one of a druj's essences affects that essence only. Healing magic cast on an "unsplit" or forcibly reunited druj affects all remaining essences. Essences reduced to zero hit points cannot be healed.

Example: Our hypothetical druj now consists of three 25-hp essences. The spirit casts 25 hp of healing magic on one of its essences. Now its three parts now have 50, 25, and 25 hp. Had the spirit cast the same curative spell on itself before splitting, the druj would have 50 hp, and each of its post-split essences would also have 50 hp. See "The Final Confrontation" for details on the spirit's ability to heal itself.

5. In order to kill a druj, the singular, united spirit or all four of its essences must be slain in one night. A druj that survives until dawn regains all eliminated essences when it regains its powers the following evening.

Example: Our hypothetical druj currently has three essences (50, 25, and 25 hp). The heroes eliminate both 25-hp essences, but the other one heals itself up to the original druj's 60-hp limit. The heroes have taken quite a bit of damage themselves by this time, so they decide to retreat and finish off the druj the next night.

Just before dawn, the lone remaining essence "recombines" (even though there aren't any other surviving essences, the DM should remember that the 60-hp survivor is merely an essence itself, and not the druj as a whole). Using the formulas from Rule 2, we get the following results: 60 + 0 + 0 (+ 0) = 60; 60/3 = 20 (three being the number of essences the PCs were last battling; one was slain prior to the druj's forced recombining).

The druj is down to 20 hp—badly battered but not yet beaten, not by a long shot! A few healing spells later, the spirit is back to 60 hp. When it goes looking for the PCs again the following night, the revitalized druj will have a full complement of four 60-hp essences, and the battle can begin anew.

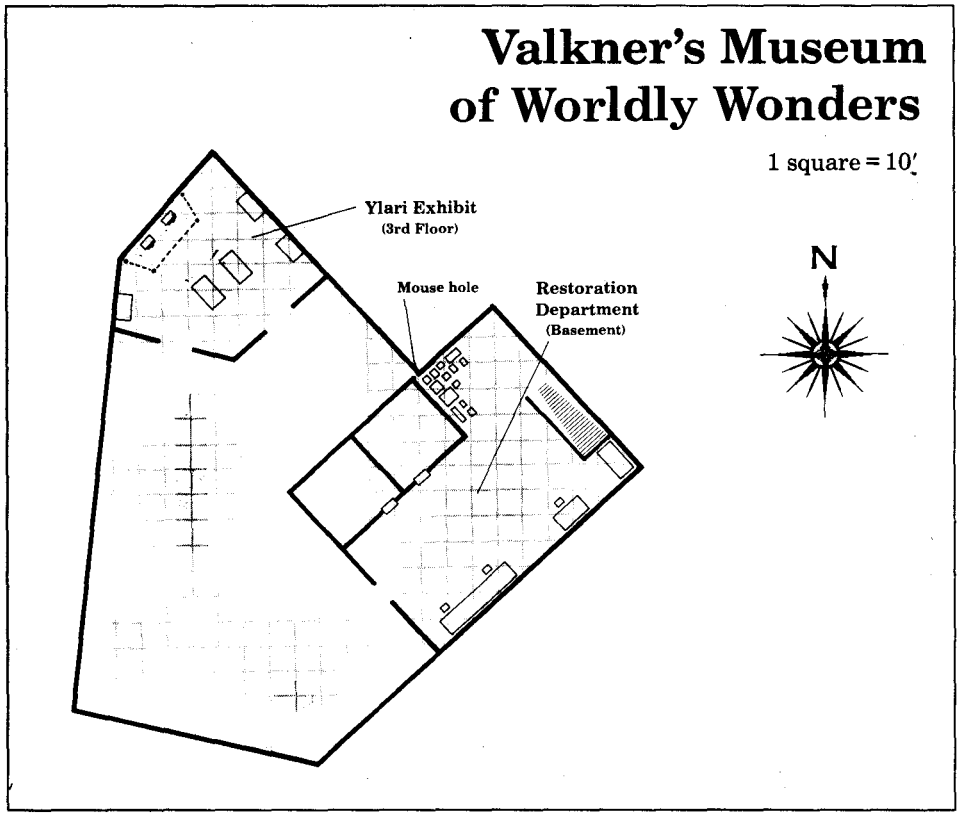
The PCs need not be Ylari to take exception to some of the curator's actions or opinions. Valkner's morality might prove objectionable to one or more of the PCs and bring them into conflict with the museum curator. If his hired hands discover that the artifacts are stolen and confront him, Valkner will attempt to negotiate some equitable resolution. If his back is to the wall, however, Valkner might very well turn to the "thug solution" detailed above.

Although it is unlikely, the PCs may try to join forces with the hand druj to battle Valkner and recover the Ylari artifacts. Al-Djamal's spirit approves of such a plan, if the heroes can find a way of conversing with the mouthless spirit. A *speak with monsters* spell should create a telepathic link with the druj. Be advised, however, that a spirit is a vengeful, unmerciful killing machine. Once Valkner and the other museum employees are slain, Thanatos's deadly minion takes its appetite for destruction into the streets of Glantri City, claiming a horrible toll of innocent lives. PC clerics could be punished by their Immortal patrons for helping the spirit (and Thanatos, indirectly), or might even be ordered to make restitution by hunting down the hand druj and ending its deadly rampage.

Valkner's Museum of Worldly Wonders

Glaundro Valkner's museum is a stately four-story stone edifice located in the Entertainers' Quarter of Glantri City (see the accompanying map). The museum is not mapped out in its entirety, as most of the adventure's action takes place in only one or two areas of the building. An outline of the museum's shape and size is provided, however, complete with detailed maps of the Ylari exhibit (located on the third floor) and the Restoration Department (in the basement). Also, a few notes on the museum and its contents are provided below for DMs who wish to elaborate on this scenario or make Valkner's Museum of Worldly Wonders a permanent fixture in their campaigns.

Admission to the museum costs 1 gp for adults, 3 sp for children under 13, and 5 sp for students of the city's Great School of Magic. Of course, Glaundro will not charge the PCs admission when they are in the museum to investigate



the murders. If the heroes are successful in defeating the hand druj and its mummy minions, the grateful curator will allow the PCs free admission for all future visits they make to his museum.

The building's first and second floors are dedicated to local Glantrian exhibits, including displays about magic. The featured exhibit here is "The Elemental Planes: Facts, Theories, and Conjecture."

The museum's third floor contains several exhibits of artifacts from all over the Known World. Current displays here include a collection of ceremonial costumes and weapons from the tribes of the Atruaghin Clans, a breathtaking model of the famous coral castle of the Kingdom of Ierendi, and the Ylari exhibit that plays a central role in this adventure.

The top floor of the building is an art gallery that contains a wide range of paintings, sculptures, and other pieces of artistic genius. The basement is divided into a number of storage rooms plus the Restoration Department, where the museum's artifacts are cleaned, touched up, and put back together.

Valkner has hired the services of a magical security company to protect his museum from theft. All items on display in the Museum of Worldly Wonders have been treated with a special enchantment that allows the wizard-president of the security firm to pinpoint the location of any object removed from the premises. This enchantment may be negated, however, by a successful *dispel magic* spell against 30th-level magic, so the system is far from fail-safe.

None of the items in Valkner's museum have been given a gp value. The PCs are supposed to be helping the curator solve his problem, not robbing him blind. Even if the PCs do succeed in stealing valuable pieces from the museum, it should prove very difficult for them to find a fence who deals in museum-quality artifacts.

Day One: Valkner's Mummies

Valkner asks the PCs to examine the mummies as soon as possible. He requests that they refrain from using fire or explosive spells (like *fireball* and *lightning bolt*) against the mummies, as he doesn't want other pieces of the Ylari exhibit damaged (or his entire museum burned to the ground!). The curator tags along to watch his hired hands in action, but does so from a safe distance.

The centerpieces of the Ylari display are the two gold- and gem-inlaid sarcophagi propped against the northeast wall, but a variety of valuable urns, scepters, masks, and other trinkets are featured in display cases and tables nearby. Unless, by some amazing coincidence, one of the PCs is an expert in ancient Ylari artifacts, nothing short of a *lore* spell should indicate that these items are from the tomb of the Nithian queen Nennaya-Sherat and not from some other burial site, as Valkner has suggested.

When the PCs open either sarcophagus, they behold an ancient, ragged, mummified figure with its arms crossed before it. The mummy doesn't attack until it is physically touched; then it reaches out stiffly and tries to kill the person who disturbed its rest.

Mummies (2): AC 3; HD 5+1**; hp 40 each; THAC0 14; MV 60' (20'); #AT 1 touch; Dmg 1-12 plus disease; Save F5; ML 12; INT 6; AL C; XP 575; RC/195.

Anyone viewing a mummy must make a Saving Throw vs. Paralysis or be paralyzed with fear until the mummy is out of sight (this effect is negated by a *remove fear* spell). The touch of a mummy infects its victim with a rotting disease that prevents all magical healing and reduces normal healing to 10% of the normal rate. This malady can be treated with a *cure disease* spell.

These undead can be damaged only by fire, holy water, spell attacks, and magical weapons, all of which do only half damage. They are immune to all *sleep, charm,* and *hold* spells, as well as poisons and gases.

Clerical Turning attempts against the mummies must initially be made against the mummies' hand druj liege (a spirit). If a cleric succeeds in this first Turning attempt, he breaks the druj's control over the mummies. The bandaged monsters hesitate for a moment but then resume their attack. Further attempts at Turning the monsters are handled normally. See RC/217-218 for full details on undead lieges and pawns.

Barring a horrendous streak of bad luck, the PCs should have little difficulty disposing of the mummies. If the PCs defeat the mummies in hack-and-slash fashion (leaving behind the undead's shattered corpses), Valkner praises their efforts and tells them that he'll have

someone "clean up the mess." Unless the PCs have reason to believe that a greater threat still remains within the museum (perhaps because of an unusually ineffective clerical Turning attempt, for example), the curator pays out their reward money and wishes the heroes good luck in their future endeavors.

If the adventurers ask for permission to investigate the museum further, Valkner grants them their wish but insists that they leave the premises at closing time. The heroes will probably find nothing of interest. The hand druj is *invisible* and hiding in a mouse hole in the Restoration Department in the basement of the museum. The following morning, however, the adventure will begin anew.

Day Two: Another Murder

At sunrise, the PCs are again summoned to the museum by Valkner's servant Jonas. "Another murder," is all the man will tell the heroes as he takes them to the museum.

The curator, wearing a look of grim shock and disbelief, greets the PCs at the door. He leads the group to a small room in the museum's basement. The door to this chamber reads "Restoration Department." In the middle of the floor lies a motionless body.

"That's Ramos Tendlebur, the head of this department," Valkner says. "He's been strangled, just like the two guards the other night. Ramos stayed late last night, fixing up some important artifacts so they could be put on display."

If the PCs completely annihilated the two mummies during their battle with the undead on the previous day (via clerical Turning Destruction or through a *disintegrate* spell, for example), Valkner's reference to important artifacts is inconsequential to this adventure. If, however, the party defeated the creatures with physical attacks, the important artifacts that the unfortunate Mr. Tendlebur was restoring for exhibition were the two mummies.

In such a case, Valkner tries to justify the restoration of the mummies as "important for the scientific and archeological communities of the world." He also claims to have tested the mummies with a barrage of detection spells before ordering that the battered corpses be touched up and put back on display. If the PCs conduct their own magical testing of the corpses, all results are negative. *Speak with the dead* spells also fail, as the corpses have been dead for centuries and have no memories of their recent activities as undead creatures. The hand druj itself, not its mummy minions, killed Tendlebur.

If Valkner is aware that the PC party includes a cleric, he offers the party an additional 1,000 gp if their cleric will raise his dear friend and associate from the dead.

Using a *raise dead* or *speak with the dead* spell to get Tendlebur's version of the incident provides vague details of his death. The man claims to have been working diligently on his project when he sensed a presence behind him. He turned around, only to be seized by the throat in a viselike grip. He died instantly and never saw his killer.

The PCs might rightly wonder how the man could turn to face his killer and then be strangled to death without even catching a glimpse of the murderer. In truth, Tendlebur died from the druj's poisonous touch; his throat was crushed by the hand of Al-Djamal after the man was already dead.

Not knowing what else to do, a troubled

Curator Valkner asks the PCs to stay in his museum overnight. Of course, he offers to triple their reward money. If the mummies' corpses are still lying around and the PCs demand that Valkner destroy them once and for all, the curator reluctantly agrees to have the ancient cadavers incinerated immediately.

The Final Confrontation

The hand druj makes its move against the PCs shortly after midnight. The druj's attack strategy depends on how completely the heroes dealt with its mummy minions the previous day. An assortment of possible tactics for the spirit is provided below.

Mummy Minions

If the bodies of the two mummies are still in the building, the hand druj uses its special *animate dead* power to revive them. The spirit then orders the mummies to seek and destroy the PCs, following its minions at a distance as they move to attack the heroes. If possible, the druj remains hidden from sight while the mummies battle the adventurers, reanimating the undead creatures each time one is vanquished (see below for full details). If discovered, the druj splits its essence (see sidebar) and attacks, using the other tactics outlined here.

Because these mummies have taken a previous battering at the hands of the PCs, they have only half their original hit-point totals (20 hp each). As before, the mummies must initially be Turned as spirits to break the druj's control over them.

When a mummy is reduced to 0 hp, it falls lifeless to the floor. The next round, the druj uses its *animate dead* power to revive the monster. The revitalized mummy has half the number of hit points with which it started the previous battle (round fractions up). Thus, when a 20-hp mummy is slain, the druj immediately re-animates it, creating a 10-hp monster. Each time a mummy is re-animated, the druj regains control over it, so PC clerics must again Turn the bandaged undead as spirits. If the druj remains undiscovered by the PCs, it will re-animate its mummy pawns twice before engaging the heroes itself.

Spirit-ual Healing

The spirit's *finger of death* power (the reverse of a *raise dead* spell) can obviously be used to eliminate opponents. What may not be so obvious, however, is that this same power can be used by the spirit to heal damage inflicted on it by the heroes. *Finger of death,* when cast on an undead being with 10 HD or more, actually cures 3d10 hp damage (see the spell's description, RC/38). Because mummies fall below the 10-HD requirement, the druj cannot use this power to heal its undead pawns.

It is to the druj's advantage to cast healing magic on itself when its essences are united, so the healing will affect all its essences (see the examples of Rule 4 in the "Hand Druj" sidebar). It will also attempt to heal individual essences that drop below 30 hp.

Silence is Golden

Because the druj doesn't need to speak to utilize its spell-like powers, it is unaffected by *silence 15' radius* spells. As a result, it is highly advantageous for the druj to surround itself with *silence* spells (perhaps even cast on the druj itself or its separate essences). In such a scenario, the druj will still be able to use its own spell powers while PC spell-casters will be at a decided disadvantage.

Fight or Flight

The battle with the druj should be a challenging struggle for the PCs. If the spirit is holding its own in combat, it fights to the death. If the PCs are beating it decisively, however, the druj attempts to flee, perhaps under the cover of magical darkness. The spirit hides and licks its wounds (probably in the mouse hole in the Restoration Department). After healing itself, the druj will engage the PCs again the following night.

PCs Abandon Ship

The PCs may well find that they aren't strong enough to defeat the druj during their initial confrontation with the spirit, especially if they've used up a number of spells and other resources battling the resilient mummies. In such a case it would be wise to flee. The druj (and its mummy pawns, if any remain) will pursue the PCs throughout the museum but will not leave the building. The druj doesn't want to stray too far from the Ylari artifacts that are the very cause of its existence. If the heroes escape from the museum, they can heal themselves, rememorize spells, and again challenge the spirit of Al-Djamal the following night. Of course, the druj will also heal itself and be at full power for the rematch.

Concluding the Adventure

If the heroes eliminate the druj, Glaundro Valkner pays their promised reward and heaps praise and thanks on them. He tells the PCs that they are welcome to drop by his museum any time—free of charge—and offers them an opportunity for future employment (he's currently organizing a dinosaur-hunting expedition to the Thanegioth Archipelago and can use all the help he can get). An inventive DM can create any number of new adventures by having Valkner send the PCs to the ends of the Known World searching for museum-quality artifacts.

If the PCs fail to destroy the druj and decide that the hand spirit is out of their league, Valkner gives them half the promised reward money (or less, at the DM's discretion), but only after the PCs have told him everything they've learned about the spirit's attacks, defenses, and strategies. The curator then hires another party of adventurers that succeeds in finally putting to rest the vengeful spirit of Al-Djamal.

If the players enjoyed battling a monster as powerful and complex as the hand druj featured in this adventure, the DM is directed to the entry entitled "Fyrmont 6: Even Mummies Stretch Their Legs" on pages 211-212 of the *Poor Wizard's Almanac.* It seems that the tomb of Queen Nennaya-Sherat had another mummified guardian in it—a bandaged, lichlike creature called Shma-Uai. This monstrosity has all the abilities and spell-casting powers of a 21st-level clerical lich plus the additional asset of being able to polymorph itself into the form of any typical human at will.

Shma-Uai's sworn duty is to track down and slay anyone who has either entered the tomb of Nennaya-Sherat (Valkner's on the list) or handled any of her grave-goods (didn't some of the PCs open the sarcophagi to get at the mummies inside on day one of this adventure?). If the DM feels up to the challenge of role-playing another ultra-complex monstrous foe, here's the perfect guy for the part, and he'll be heading in the heroes' direction in the not-too-distant future. Ω

Continued from page 9

modification. This is exactly what DUNGEON Magazine provides. And that's why I've been an avid reader since its inception.

It's a fact that TSR has changed over the years, but for the most part I believe the change has been good. No longer are modules or monsters hard to find; and if you can't come up with a world, there are several to choose from. We didn't have that kind of variety in the early days. Frankly, I wish we had. There's no telling how much more fun we could have had, and we certainly had the time for it.

One more thing that I'm grateful for is DUNGEON Magazine itself. It's great because it has become a sounding board for everyone who has ever wanted to write an adventure of their own and share it with more than a few friends. There is a lot of talent out there, and through DUNGEON we get to experience some of the genius of gamers like ourselves. That's the real treasure of DUNGEON's trove.

Christina A. Stiles
York, South Carolina

DM's Dilemma

I write to you with a problem, one that I'm sure is not unique. I am positive that many of my fellow DMs will commiserate with me when I ask the question: What do you do with stupid players?

It first became evident that my group of players had an average Intelligence score of 3 when I tried to run Wolfgang Baur's scenario, "The Whale" (issue #35). I did all the right things. The PCs arrived in Kross, met with Trausti, and even shared a meal with him. They then moved on and came across the stranded whale. With a ranger/druid in the party, I thought that this should make an interesting encounter.

I read them the boxed text. I described the situation in my best dramatic voice, and waited for their reaction. What do they do? They wait. And wait. And wait. It is only when the battle has been won, the men from Ravenhouse have retreated, and those from Kross have actually begun butchering the whale that the party feels it is safe to make their presence known. Not only that, but they were left wondering why I had gone to all the trouble of setting up the encounter.

Okay, I admit it. It was my fault. I gave them an adventure that was over their inexperienced heads. Perhaps they thought that two groups of men fighting over a beached whale was a common sight in the average AD&D campaign world.

So, for their next outing, I decided on something a little easier: "A Way With Words" (issue #41). Fortunately, they didn't have much trouble with this, although I managed to convince the PC bard that *The Big Book of Sappy, Drivelly Love Poems* was magical. There he was, sucking up to Harfur Glumtoes as he tried to add spells to his meager grimoire. It took a lot to convince him that it was just a book of poems.

But still I pressed on, trying desperately to make this campaign work. I then gave them "Euphoria Horrors" (issue #34), but I was a little concerned that the combat might be too hard for them.

When the PCs met Michael, all was going well. When they tried looking for Drake, however, they had unexpected problems. Despite repeated clues that they weren't on the right track, it took them about half an hour (real time) to realize that they were going to have to search the forest, not just ride around expecting clues to jump into their laps. As soon as they found something, I adjudged that it was the tasloi tracks, since I didn't want to further confuse the party.

When the adventurers reached the cave, the bard showed a rare spark of initiative and managed to use his climb-walls skill to get into the cave unnoticed. "Great," I thought. "Now he can let the rest of the party in, and they can pick off the tasloi in groups of five." But does he do this? Of course not. Wanting to see exactly who inhabits the strange-looking cave, he cries "Hi ho!" in classic Kermit the Frog fashion. I swear that no role- playing jury would have convicted me of murder at that point. But I restrained myself.

Of course, the PCs did not survive that encounter. But, as the players are eager to start again with new characters, I'm still left with my original dilemma. What do you do with extremely slow-witted players?

Or maybe it isn't their fault. Are the adventures in your magazine too hard, presenting intricate plots and subtle clues that the average person couldn't pick up? I don't think that is the case. Or maybe it's me. Maybe I didn't present the information clearly, or I didn't drop enough hints about what would be a good course of action. However, I have DMed a number of different groups in the past few years, and have never had this problem before.

Please, somebody help me! There must be something that can be done. Please print my full address so my fellow gamers can offer their solutions (or commiserations) personally.

Matt Mulcahy
14 Rylston Court
Mt. Eliza, Victoria 3930
Australia

We hope that Matt can run quickly when his players come after him.

Town & Country Trouble

HELLLP!!! I'm an inexperienced DM who needs help. My players expect the most out of me but I can't give it to them because I don't know how.

What do I do when my players want to go outside adventuring? How do I fill in all those details in the forest? Do I just say, "You leave your city, go through a forest 10 miles in diameter and you come to another city." That's what I've been doing so far but the players now want some more details. Also, how do I make a city exciting? Whenever my players go into a city, I let them walk around wherever they want to. If they say they are looking for someone on the streets I say, "You see. . . um. . . a person in brown boots and a jacket." How do I make these situations more exciting?

Before I sign off, I would like to thank Jasper Jones for "Last of the Iron House" and also Ann Dupuis for "The Fountain of Health," both in issue #39. They are the only types of modules I can handle, ones in a dungeon!

Mark Krzeminski
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Canada
Ω

RAIDERS OF THE CHANTH

BY RANDY MAXWELL

Baking brains in the Sea of Silt

Artwork by Tom Baxa

Randy writes: "I live in the desert, so it's not surprising that I like the DARK SUN® setting. However, I don't recommend the world of Athas for inexperienced DMs. A novice DM has enough to keep track of in running a convincing adventure without throwing in the Athasian extras of a harsh climate and psionics. For those DMs up to the challenge of the DARK SUN setting, the following adventure should prove interesting. As Shun the Mul said, 'A mind is a terrible thing to waste. But in this case, you'd better waste it before it wastes you!' "

"Raiders of the Chanth" is an AD&D® game module for 4-6 PCs of levels 3-5 (about 20 levels total). The module is designed for use with the DARK SUN setting, and the DM should be familiar with the unique properties and peculiarities of the DARK SUN world before running this adventure. Also, the DM is advised to become thoroughly familiar with the new monster used in the module (see area 6) before running the adventure.

The adventuring party should be well equipped and should have a good mixture of races, classes, and non-evil alignments. The party must include at least one 6th- or 7th-level psionicist. Two or more lower-level, multi-classed, or dual-classed psionicists can be substituted for a single more powerful psionicist. A powerful wild talent can replace one of the multi- or dual-classed PCs.

The *Valley of Dust and Fire* accessory provides useful information on the Sea of Silt but is not required for play.

Adventure Background

Some of the normally peaceful herdsmen of the island north of Grak's Pool in the Estuary of the Forked Tongue of the Sea of Silt have suddenly turned to banditry. The island bandits raid the trade route from Altaruk to Grak's Pool, and the tradeway between Altaruk and Gulg running along the northern shore of the Big Fork. The rogue islanders suddenly appear out of the silt of the estuary riding round, sail-powered, *levitating* platforms. Once ashore, they attack the caravans, then disappear back to the island with their booty and slaves. The raids are becoming more frequent, more audacious, and more violent. The raiders don't seem to care what losses they incur or inflict. Reports from surviving caravans claim the raids are usually led by gith captains

who command human followers to do their bidding. Strangely enough, caravan guards captured in previous raids are joining the raiders and helping them raid other caravans. Unfortunately, the raiders fight to the death, so no prisoners have been taken for interrogation.

The trading houses of Wavir, Rees, and Tromblador are tired of losing men and goods and have decided to put a stop to the raids. The PC party is contacted by Plaget Lull, a representative of the trading houses (it is assumed the PCs already have a least a small reputation as capable adventurers and are worthy of hire by the merchant houses). Plaget shares the following information with the PCs:

> "We want you to take the fight to the enemy and make a raid on the bandits' island base. We'll pay 500 ceramic pieces to each survivor, plus four tuns of water for the party to drink or sell, and we'll replace any lost or damaged equipment if you succeed. We'll also give you a 10% finder's fee for any stolen property you recover.
>
> "If you agree, we'll provide transportation to the island. We've captured a few of the bandit's flying disks, and we've figured out how to use them. When you get to the island, go to Darktarn Oasis. Most of the islanders who haven't turn bandit live there. They may be able to supply you with useful information and give you the lay of the land."

Plaget gives the PCs a map of Big Fork Island, showing only the island's outline, the mountains, and the location of Darktarn Oasis (see page 39). If the PCs inquire why the trade houses don't raid the island themselves, Plaget explains that, while the merchants have a great many guards and fighters capable of protecting caravans, they have few of the caliber and expertise needed for the island raid. For any inquiries about the flying disks used by the bandits, see the "Wind Howdahs" sidebar on page 38.

For the DUNGEON MASTER™

Approximately five years ago, the Dictator Andropinis, ruler of the city-state of Balic, ordered the performance of an experiment. In his unending search for knowledge and the power therein, the ruler of Balic grew weary of sages, wise templars, and other masters of arcane lore. He found they either could not answer his questions or took months to solve a problem or find the information he needed. Andropinis decided to build a magical brain. He ordered one of his powerful wizard minions, an elf named Mardak, to construct a creature of pure thought to speed up the process of problem solving and information finding.

Andropinis ordered the experiment be carried out in secret, far away from the city. He feared a rebellion among his templars and lore masters, who would not like the idea of being replaced by an inhuman brain. Mardak chose the ruins of an abandoned tower on Big Fork Island in the Estuary of the Forked Tongue to the northwest of Balic. The elven wizard considered the tower and island isolated enough for the experiment's secrecy, but close enough to Altaruk, Grak's Pool, and other towns for convenience.

Careless of his power and secure in his knowledge, Mardak constructed a large *glassteeled* sphere and filled it with a special alchemical solution of encephalic fluids. The wizard collected the brains of a man, a dwarf, an elf, a halfling, and a thri-kreen. Then, using *polymorph other, limited wish,* and *wish* spells, Mardak merged the brains into one large mega-brain, which he placed within the crystalline sphere.

Mardak thought he had constructed a super-intelligent, problem-solving slave to serve his master's every need. Unfortunately, what he had constructed saw things otherwise. Using its psionic abilities, the mega-brain promptly destroyed Mardak and the wizard's servants and guards. The few that managed to survive fled the island and returned to Balic with the news of the experiment's catastrophic end. When the information reached the sorcerer-king's ears, he merely shrugged and stated, "How unfortunate. Oh well, it was but an idle fancy." The experiment was abandoned and forgotten, and Andropinis moved on to other matters.

The brain constructed by the wizard called itself the Chanth and had no intention of simply being abandoned. On rare occasions, the Chanth was able to psionically capture a slave or two, unlucky islanders who wandered too close to the tower. Recently, the Chanth rescued the remnants of a gith tribe from certain death (see area 5 for details). With his slaves and gith allies, the Chanth's dreams of empire have been kindled. Its intentions are to rule the trade routes on both sides of the estuary, take Grak's Pool, and then the trade hub of Altaruk. It has not made further plans beyond rule of the area around the estuary.

However, as things stand now, the Chanth has yet to complete even the smallest of these grandiose schemes. It has taken the mind-creature the last five years just to get this far. While it can attack caravans on the trade routes, it cannot control the roads. It is, therefore, slowly building up a sufficient force of slaves and material to place a permanent encampment on the road between Altaruk and Gulg. The force will be landed and resupplied by the wind howdahs.

Big Fork Island

Situated in the larger, northern fork of the Estuary of the Forked Tongue and due north of Grak's Pool, Big Fork Island is in an excellent location for raiding the trade routes near the estuary's shores. The island is approximately 15 miles long and eight miles wide. The western edge of the island is a mountainous region that gives way suddenly to a mix of stony barrens and scrub plains. The island's resources are stretched thin but are adequate to maintain a small human enclave, an even smaller collection of giants, and a small tribe of gith.

The nomadic herdsmen of Athas gather themselves into family-oriented groups called "douars" (see Nomadic Herdsmen, *Wanderers Journal,* page 29). The island's humans cluster near the flatter, stonier areas of the island in a typical douar. At one time the douar welcomed strangers. Now, due to recent raids on their erdlu flocks by the same bandits who raid the trade routes, the islanders are more cautious and less openhanded. Still, the douar is not automatically hostile to strangers or wanderers.

The island's giants make their homes in the mountains. The beast-headed giants lair primarily on the higher slopes of the island's northernmost mountains. The human-headed giants make their homes in the southernmost peaks. However, the giants wander extensively and any type of giant may be found anywhere on the island. The giants have adopted a "live and let live" attitude toward the island's native

Wind Howdahs

Using Mindlink and other telepathic sciences and devotions, the Chanth taught its slaves how to construct the wind howdahs. Each wind howdah is constructed of a stiff weed mesh carefully and intricately woven around a polished erdlu-bone frame. The weed used is akin to stiff bamboo but grows in several shades of brown from very light tan to almost black. The weeds for each wind howdah have been carefully chosen and woven into complex geometric designs, mandalas, and even artistic scenes depicting the island douar's daily life. The erdlu bones around which the weed is woven are chosen for their whiteness and flawlessness. They are then continually rubbed and polished with sand until they literally gleam.

The Chanth then Empowers the wind howdahs with the ability to Levitate. Each wind howdah has an Intelligence score of 12 and communicates by semi-empathy. See pages 93-94 of the *CPH* for details on Empowered items.

A wind howdah is controlled by the person who handles the sail (called the pilot). Through semi-empathy, the wind howdah gains or loses altitude (maximum 1' per second or 60' per round) as the pilot desires. The semi-empathy with the wind howdah is slow and does not allow for urgency. The wind howdah takes one round to comprehend the command (either gain altitude or lose altitude) and another round to act on the command. Thus, if a pilot must gain 60' of altitude to avoid crashing into a cliff, he must give the command to the wind howdah at least three rounds before he gets to the cliff (one round for the wind howdah to comprehend, one round for it to act on the information, and one round to gain the necessary 60' of altitude). When not in use, the wind howdahs hover about 12"-18" off the ground, waiting to be boarded by a pilot and loaded with cargo.

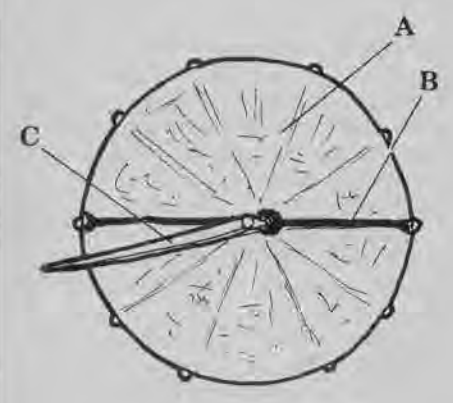
Though extremely lightweight, each wind howdah can safely carry 1,500 lbs. Weight over the 1,500-lb. limit is likely to rip the weed matting free of the frame or break the erdlu-bone frame during flight. If this occurs, the wind howdah suddenly loses altitude and disappears into the silt or crashes to the ground. There is a 1% chance per 5 lbs. of weight over 1,500 lbs. of crashing the wind howdah. For example, a wind howdah is loaded with the maximum 1,500 lbs. of goods. Therefore, a 50-lb. halfling pilot has a 10% chance of crashing, a 450-lb. thri-kreen pilot has a 90% of crashing, and anyone weighing 500 lbs. or more has a 100% chance of crashing the wind howdah.

Roll for crashes only once per flight. If the wind howdah can handle the load, no further rolls are necessary until more weight is added. If a crash is indicated, it occurs 1-6 rounds after the wind howdah is loaded with the excess weight.

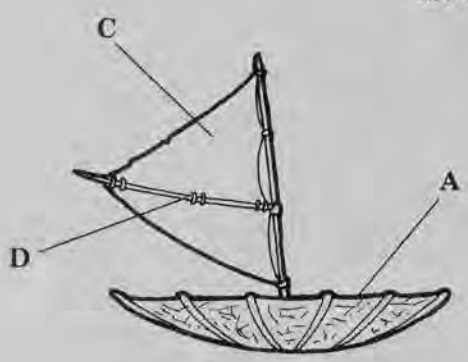
The wind howdahs are not graceful fliers and have been designed more for handling weight than for aerodynamic stability. Therefore, the wind howdahs are limited in speed. Because they Levitate, they move at the speed of the wind when the sail is raised. Daily wind direction is left to the DM's discretion. Average daily wind speed is determined by rolling 2d20, but the DM should allow for calm days (0 wind speed) and storm days (wind speeds of 2d20+30).

The maximum safe speed of a wind howdah is 25 miles per hour. Speeds in excess of the maximum cause the wind howdah to pitch and buck, tossing cargo, passengers, and even the pilot overboard. For every 1 mph over the maximum, the howdah has a 5% chance to pitch or yaw so much that the pilot and passengers must make Dexterity checks or be tossed overboard. Passengers make Dexterity checks at −2. The pilot, who is holding the sail, makes his at −4. Falling damage is determined normally, but PCs falling into the Sea of Silt must be quickly rescued or die of suffocation. The fate of the cargo is left to the DM's discretion. Unsecured lightweight objects are easily lost if the wind howdah begins to pitch and roll, while a heavy box of weapons might not shift an inch even in the wildest of barrel-rolls.

Aerial combat is difficult using the wind howdahs, because they are not maneuverable enough for such actions, even against ground-based targets. Missile fire is possible from the wind howdahs, but considering the difficulty and number of penalties incurred, it is virtually useless except at point-blank range. For more information, see pages 77-78 of the *DMG*. However, magical and psionic combat are still possible between wind howdahs as long as they are within range.



Top View



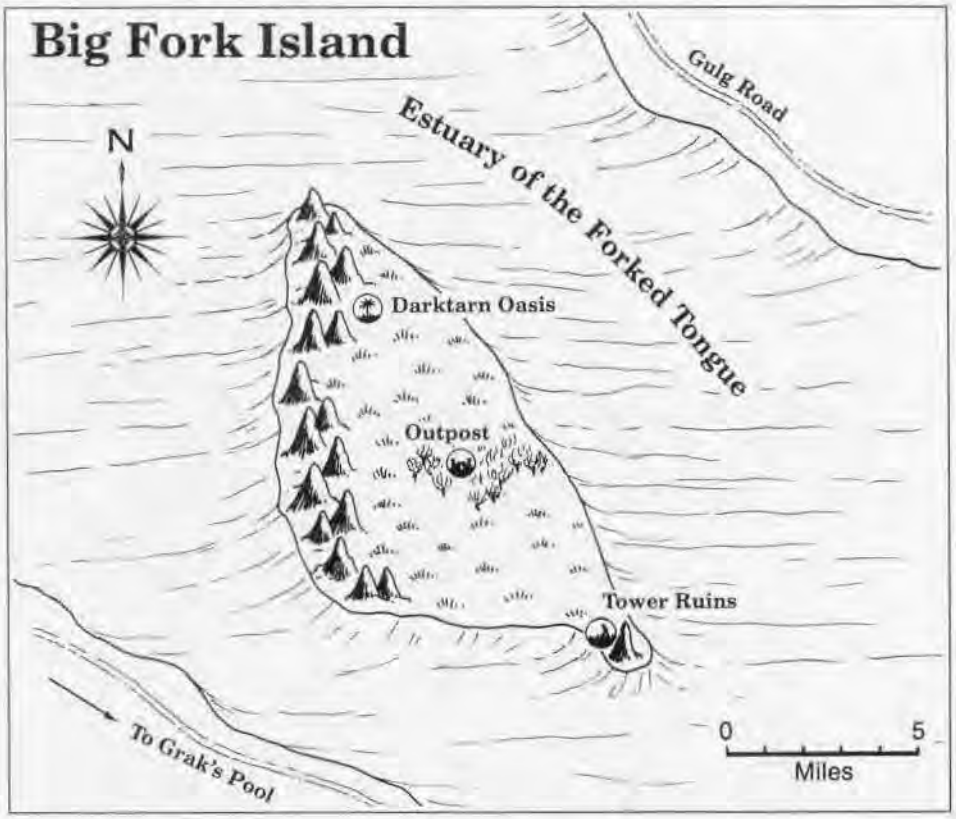
Side View

A. Platform
B. Crossbar, sail anchor
C. Sail
D. Sail Control Bar

humans, but visitors and uninvited guests may not find the giants so friendly.

The giants live primarily by their trade with humans, both on and off the island. They also tend a small kank hive somewhere in the mountains (the exact location of the hive is known only to the giants and is left to the DM's discretion). Travelers through the island's mountains may suddenly find themselves confronted by kank warriors protecting the hive and angry giants protecting the kanks. See the "Island Random Encounters" sidebar on page 40 for details and statistics.

At one time the mountains also held a small gith tribe, but the giants and humans joined together and drove the gith to the extreme southern tip of the island. Any encounters with gith will likely take place there. Even without the gith, the mountains still hold a variety of horrors. A silk wyrm lairs somewhere in a mountain valley, gaj roam both the highlands and the stony plains of the island, and there are a number of deadly giant insects to avoid. Also, a snake-filled thicket of brambles and brush runs east to west across the middle of the island.



Darktarn Oasis

The douar of Big Fork island is fairly small, comprised of only eight families that maintain a permanent camp at Darktarn Oasis. The oasis gets its name from its fortuitous location. It stands below a great outcropping of stone, between two high bluffs that shade the water hole for virtually the entire day.

The oasis is a slowly dying artesian well whose water seeps upward into a large, shallow basin. It is obvious from the dry, rocky streambed leading away from the tarn that at one time this water flowed to the estuary. Now, not even the eldest of the islanders can remember a time when the streambed held water or the basin overflowed. Water from this oasis is quite cool and sweet. The oasis is surrounded by several fig trees, date palms, and thorny blackberry bushes.

The islanders live in large, dug-out lodges built near the water. Each dug-out is little more than one large room roofed with palm fronds, scrub plants, and sod. These camouflaged underground shelters have the advantages of being cooler than above-ground dwellings and being difficult to detect from the air or from a distance.

While the islanders have little to spare, they welcome strangers and share what they have. The PCs are welcome to stay, so long as they mind their manners. The islanders will revoke their welcome and turn on the adventuring party if the PCs are caught stealing, harming an erdlu or an erdlu guard or herder (even accidentally), fighting (even among themselves), wasting water (even their own), being disrespectful to the douar elders, or using any spell or psionic ability on a douar member without permission (this includes both beneficial and harmful spells and abilities). The islanders also turn on any PC templars or defilers whose true class is revealed. Penalties for offenses range from being driven out of the encampment to being driven off the island.

Life at Darktarn Oasis is relaxed and fairly comfortable, revolving around the family and the erdlu flocks. Arguments are generally settled justly and amiably by the elders. Blood feuds among the families are a rare thing. They find life on the island hard and tenuous enough without fighting among themselves. The days are spent guarding the flocks and protecting Darktarn from unwanted intruders.

The erdlus are of extreme importance to the douar. To defend the erdlus, the villagers ring the flock with a wide circle of guards and, within the guards, a smaller, tighter circle of herders. The guards intercept any threat approaching the flock, and the herders keep individual erdlu from straying.

Flock guards (12): AL N; AC 8; MV 12; F3; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 12; leather armor, bone daggers (Dmg 1d4 – 1), bone spears (Dmg 1d6 – 1), wooden clubs (Dmg 1d6 – 2).

The guards immediately challenge anyone approaching the erdlus. Due to recent assaults by the Chanth's raiders (see "The Thicket" and the "Tower Ruins" sections), the guards are nervous, jumpy, and quick to attack anyone who delays in answering their challenge.

Herders (19): AL N; AC 10; MV 12; F1 (avg); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 10; bone daggers, wooden clubs.

Island Random Encounters

The frequency of random encounters varies by terrain (see page 101 of the *DMG*). Terrain types on Big Fork Island include scrub/bush, desert, and mountains. If an encounter is called for, roll 2d10 and consult the following table:

2 **Gaj** (1-2): INT very; AL NE; AC 2; MV 12; HD 7; hp 36; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA psionics; SD half damage from nonmetal weapons; SZ L; ML 15; XP 2,000; WJ/91.

Psionics: Sciences: Domination, Mass Domination, Probe, Tower of Iron Will; Devotions: Aversion, Contact, Ego Whip, ESP, False Sensory Input, Id Insinuation, Inflict Pain, Intellect Fortress, Life Detection, Mental Barrier, Mind Blank, Psionic Blast, Send Thoughts; Def Modes: IF, MB, M-, TW; Power Score 17; 120 PSPs.

3 **Beast-headed giant** (1-2): INT low; AL any; AC 4; MV 15; HD 15; hp 69; THAC0 5; #AT 1; Dmg 2d8+14; SA hurl rocks; SZ H; ML 16; XP 9,000; WJ/92.

Psionics: Sciences: Psychic Crush, Teleport, Teleport Other; Devotions: Attraction, Contact, Dimensional Door, Ego Whip, Inflict Pain, Mental Barrier, Mind Blank, Teleport Trigger, Thought Shield, Time Shift; Def Modes: MB, M-, TS; Power Score 13; 75 PSPs.

4 **Raider Patrol** (2-8): INT average; AL N; AC 10; MV 12; F1; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 12; bone short swords, bone spears.

These are slaves of the Chanth and under its control. They attempt to capture any strangers and bring them back to the tower ruins for interrogation and domination by the Chanth. If capture is unlikely, they attempt to kill any intruders. In all cases, these patrols fight to the death rather than surrender. As they are the unfortunate thralls of the Chanth, the DM is advised not to give experience points for destroying the patrols.

5 **Humanoid giant** (1-2): INT low; AL any; AC 4; MV 15; HD 15; hp 79; THAC0 5; #AT 1; Dmg 2d8+14; SA hurl rocks; SD immunity to psionics; SZ H; ML 16; XP 9,000; WJ/92.

6-8 **Giant ant** (5-20): INT animal; AL N; AC 3; MV 18; HD 2-3; THAC0 19 (2 HD), 17 (3 HD); #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (worker) or 2-8 (warrior); SA warriors have poison sting; SZ T; ML 9; XP 35 (worker), 175 (warrior); MM/204 (Insect).

9-13 **Flock guards** (2-12): AL N; AC 8; MV 12; F2; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 8; leather armor, bone spears, bone daggers.

These members of the island's douar are not under the domination of the Chanth.

14-16 **Giant scorpion** (1-4): INT non; AL N; AC 3; MV 15; HD 5+5; hp 31; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1-10/1-10/1-4; SA poison sting; SZ M; ML 11; XP 650; MM/309.

17 **Giant ant lion**: INT animal; AL N; AC 2; MV 9, burrow 1; HD 8; hp 30; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 5-20; SA surprise; SZ L; ML 8; XP 1,400; MM/204 (Insect).

Because of the unique nature of the DARK SUN campaign, roll 1d20 and consult the following table to determine the treasure found in the lair of an Athasian giant ant lion:

1-6	10-40 bits
7-10	20 cp
11-13	shield*
14-17	weapon*
18-19	jewelry*
20	DM's choice or roll again

All asterisked items (*) are nonmagical and nonmetal.

18 **Kanks** (2-8): INT animal; AL N; AC 5; MV 15; HD 2; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA poison; SZ L; ML 14; XP 35; WJ/85.

There is a hive of wild kanks somewhere in the mountains of the island. The exact location of the hive is known only to the island's giants. Any kank encounters are with patrolling soldiers of this hive.

19 **Erdlus** (2-8): INT animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 18; HD 3; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1-6/1-4; SZ M; ML 10; XP 65; WJ/85.

These erdlus have strayed from the douar flock. Flock guards are automatically friendly to anyone pointing out the location of such strays.

20 **Silk wyrm**: INT low; AL N; AC 3; MV 12, fly 12 (C); HD 6; hp 48; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA poison; SZ L; ML 12; XP 2,000; WJ/95.

Psionics: Science: Shadow-form; Devotions: Body Equilibrium, Catfall, Cell Adjustment, Chameleon Power, Displacement, Expansion, Heightened Senses, Mind Over Body, Reduction, Suspend Animation; Def Modes: Nil; Power Score 15; 45 PSPs.

Only one huge specimen of this type of creature exists on the island. If it is killed or captured, treat this roll as no encounter.

The herders are the very young and the very old of the douar. Their function is not to fight for the flock, but to keep the erdlus bunched and within a defined grazing area. When alerted by the guards, they drive the flock away from approaching danger.

Erdlus (32): INT animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 18; HD 3; hp 13 (avg); THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1d6/1d4; SZ M (7' tall); ML 10; WJ/85 (Animals, domestic).

The douar is ruled by a triumvirate of elders, each of whom oversees a particular sphere of douar life. The three elders are: Clanmaster Fray, in charge of the douar as a whole and daily administration of douar needs; Flockmaster Wren, in charge of the erdlu flocks and their protection; and Healmaster Salf, in charge of the spiritual and healing needs of the douar.

At present, only two of the elders are at the Darktarn encampment. Several weeks ago, Flockmaster Wren journeyed to the southern tip of the island seeking the source of the recent raids on the flocks. Wren, and those with him, never returned (see area 3 for details on Wren). Without Wren's watchful eye, the flocks suffer from predators, disease, and natural injuries. When the erdlus suffer, the douar suffers.

The islanders were aware of the Balic expedition that took up residence in the tower ruins some five years ago, but had few dealings with it. The newcomers didn't bother the douar or the erdlu flocks, so they were left in peace. None of the islanders has ever visited the tower ruins and returned to tell about it, so the villagers can offer the PCs no information other than the location of the ruins.

Clanmaster Fray: AL N; AC 10; MV 12; C5; hp 14; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; ML 12; W 12; bone spear.

Spells: *command, create water, purify food and drink; aid, charm person or mammal, hold person; spike growth.*

Fray is a cleric of the elemental plane of Water. He is master of the clan and is sometimes called the chief of the douar. He deals with the adventuring party as openly and honestly as they deal with him. In any case, he can tell the PCs little about what is happening. He has only vague suspicions about the evil afflicting his people.

Fray is a strict traditionalist. He wants only to live the life his fathers and forefathers lived before him.

Because of this, he sometimes fails to grasp the whole picture. He sees the minor changes near him while the storm on the horizon goes unnoticed.

Clanmaster Fray is unwilling to send any herders or guards with the PCs as fighters or bearers. The douar can spare two herders as guides for the PCs, but that is all. The PCs must do their own fighting, fetching, and carrying. In his dry, raspy voice, Fray offers the following advice:

> "If you seek trouble, it is in the south of the island. There is a tower there that rises from the sand like a rotting tooth. When I was young, the ruins were empty and bare, but now someone or something dwells there. Some five years ago, a band of wanderers came from Balic and took up residence in the tower ruins. What they did there I cannot say. They harmed neither douar nor erdlu, so we had no quarrel with them. They left as suddenly as they came and have never returned. The tower is too near the silt, and we do not go there.
>
> "What concerns us is the raiders who dwell there now. Because the raiders harass our erdlu flocks, Flockmaster Wren went to investigate, but he has failed to return. I know in my heart that the thing that corrupts the douar lies there.
>
> "The gith and their slaves keep a stronghold in a thicket of brambles about halfway between the oasis and the tower. Though most of the raiders are my own people, I wish you luck against them. It is a sad day when the douar turns against itself. But they raid the flocks and seem to care little for their own people, so why should we care for them? Still, if they could overcome the madness, they would be welcomed back. Such things did not happen in the old days."

Fray will go on for hours about how "things were different" in his younger days. He tells the PCs how the erdlus were bigger and tastier, the flocks were hardier and laid more eggs, the flock guards were stronger and more valiant, and "the young respected their elders and honored the old ways." If the PCs do not cut him off (respectfully, perhaps by referring to their mission), Clanmaster Fray will lecture for hours.

Healmaster Salf: AL N; AC 10; MV 12; C6; hp 14; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; I 16, W 17; ML 12; whip, bone club (Dmg 1d6 – 1).

Spells: *cure light wounds, detect poison, entangle, locate animals or plants, pass without trace; aid, augury, dust devil, goodberry, slow poison; cure disease, dispel magic, snare.*

Unlike Fray, Salf is a cleric of the elemental plane of Air. He is much more contemplative than Fray. If the PCs are in desperate straits, Salf can put in a word with Fray for them. He prefers meeting danger head on rather than trying to avoid the problem. However, Salf's loyalty is to Fray and the douar. He does not make demands or attempt to overrule any decision Fray makes. Also, if the PCs somehow offend Fray, Salf never speaks on their behalf.

If consulted, he offers the following commentary:

> "What lies to the south I cannot say for sure. But take care! It is dangerous. It is evil. And to overcome Flockmaster Wren, it is powerful! Wren was no callow lad on a snake hunt, but a strong and valiant man prepared for danger. If he was overcome, the enemy is strong indeed. It could be that a mighty gith chieftain has arisen, but that feels wrong. The gith do not take prisoners and make them their allies. I believe there is a deeper secret and a mightier enemy than the gith at work here."

The Thicket

The thicket is a thick tangle of scrub and underbrush about halfway between Darktarn Oasis and the tower ruins. The raiders have established an outpost here in order to keep an eye on the island's douar or, more precisely, on the douar's erdlu flocks. The outpost's primary purpose is to scout the erdlu flocks and notify other raiding parties where to find them. The islanders avoid the thicket as much as possible, but occasionally a herder or guard ventures too close and is captured.

Random encounters in the thicket occur on a roll of 1 on 1d10 in the morning, late afternoon, evening, and early hours before dawn. If an encounter is called for, do not use the "Island Encounters" sidebar. The thicket is alive with poisonous snakes and any encounter is with one of these.

Snake, poisonous (1-4): INT animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 15; HD 2 + 1; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison; SZ S; ML 8; XP 175; MM/320-321.

If the PCs raid the thicket outpost before approaching the tower, they find no treasure in the outpost, but the guards possess useful information. The outpost is a crudely excavated T-shaped dugout like those used by the douar at Darktarn. It provides protection from the sun, not a place to live in. The interior contains only a couple of ragged blankets and two large waterskins. The guards serve 24 hours here, then return to the tower at sundown. The outpost guard always includes one gith lieutenant and five human raiders, except near sundown, when the numbers are doubled.

Gith lieutenant: INT average; AL CE; AC 6; MV 10; HD 5; hp 22; THAC0 15; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg by weapon type or 1d4/1d4; SA springing, psionics; SD psionics; SZ M; ML 12; XP 420; MM/151 or WJ/93; bone spear.

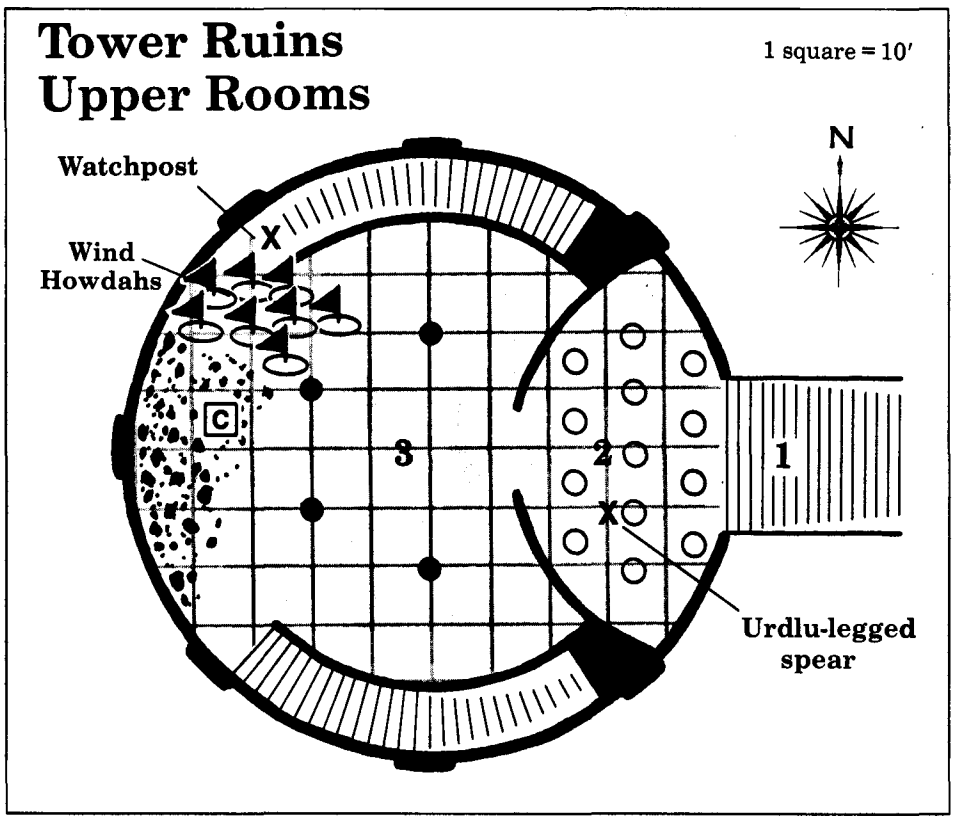
Psionics: Sciences: Tower of Iron Will, Project Force, Mass Domination; Devotions: Id Insinuation, Mind Thrust, Contact, Mind Blank, Mental Barrier, Animate Object, Animate Shadow, Ballistic Attack, Control Body, Control Flames; Def Modes: M-, MB, TW; Power Score 16; 80 PSPs.

If escape is impossible, the gith lieutenant does not allow itself to be captured. It fights to the death, using its Ballistic Attack or Animate Object ability on itself rather than be captured. If all else fails, it attempts to use Body Control to force a PC or NPC to kill it.

Guards, human (5): AL N; AC 7; MV 12; F2; hp 11 (avg); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 11; XP 35; leather armor, wooden shield, bone spear.

These humans were previously caravan guards and are now serving the gith lieutenant out of fear. In combat, the gith controls the human soldiers with its Mass Domination ability and throws them into battle as a fighting shield. While screened by the guards, the gith attempts to escape and warn the Chanth. If the guards are captured and released from the gith's psionic control, the humans want only to return to Altaruk. They will not help the PCs fight, but they will share their knowledge of the ruins.

If asked, the guards draw a map of the upper area of the ruins (areas 1-3). They know the lower rooms exist, but they have never seen them and cannot



describe them to the PCs. The guards assume the gith are responsible for the caravan attacks and for their enslavement. They know the gith serve something called "The High One." Whether this is a deity or merely the head of the gith tribe they do not know. ESP, Probe, Mindlink, or other forms of magical or psionic questioning reveal little more. The humans are mere slaves, doing as they are told. They do not know what is going on, why caravans are being raided, or even the exact numbers of gith or human guards at the ruins. They can give only vague answers, such as "quite a few" or "many."

If the outpost falls, the PCs find it impossible to ambush guards coming to relieve the post. The gith of the approaching group always Contacts his counterpart in the outpost before reaching the thicket. If the Contact fails, he retreats and notifies the Chanth that the outpost has fallen.

As the outpost is not vital to the Chanth's plans, the brain creature is likely to regard the news with only minor interest. The Chanth views the fall of the outpost as an inconvenience, not a setback, so the PCs may use it for 1d4+6 days before the Chanth's minions attempt to recapture it. The outpost is an excellent place for PCs to hide extra provisions and weapons. It is also a defensible fallback position if the PCs are forced to retreat from the tower ruins.

The PCs can cement their relationship with the douar by ridding the thicket of the raiders. The islanders treat the PCs as respected family members, and offer any and all material assistance to the PCs for further actions against the raiders. However, the islanders live or die by their erdlu flocks. Leaving the flocks underprotected is considered suicidal and virtually unthinkable to them. Taking such a course of action means putting many people at risk and perhaps threatening the entire douar's existence. Therefore, the islanders are still unlikely to leave their home to travel with the PCs.

Tower Ruins

At the very southern tip of Big Fork Island, the crumbling ruins of a tower rest on a barren rocky mountainside. The ruins are on the very edge of the Estuary of the Forked Tongue. The silt nearest the tower moves restlessly, as if it were some living thing. It never quite reaches the tower but always seems on the brink of doing so. It lolls menacingly and indolently across the sand and rocks near the base of the tower, a slow, choking death on the whim of the wind.

1. Stairs.

> As you scrabble through the stony, dusty, barren landscape between the outflung spurs of the mountain, you suddenly see the ruins of a tower. It stands a gray, jagged shard against the chalky white of the mountain. Approaching nearer, you see the tower is a crumbling ruin, a relic of long ago. Still, you marvel at the skill of the ancients and their ability to build such structures. A large stone stairway climbs out of the earth and beckons to wanderers. The stairs seem to offer cool sanctuary for anyone who wishes to ascend to the dark interior of the ruins.

These great steps of white marble appear out of the sand and silt at the base of the tower. There are nearly 50 of the shallow steps leading up to a pillared entrance hall (area 2). Two human guards stand in the deep shadows at the head of the stairs. They challenge anyone approaching within 100' of the stairs. The guards immediately notify the gith in area 2 if they see anyone approaching or moving through the area. If the PCs attack the guards, the lieutenant calls more guards from area 3 and attempts to capture or kill the PCs.

The gith lieutenant stationed in the colonnade handles any negotiations. See area 2 for details of the gith's treacherous negotiating style.

If they spot an approaching wind howdah, the guards immediately call the gith lieutenant from area 2. The lieutenant attempts to Contact the pilot and confirm whether the wind howdah contains friend or foe. If the gith cannot Contact the pilot, or the wind howdah is somehow discovered to hold enemies, the gith orders an immediate attack on the howdah as soon as it lands.

If the PCs either wait until nightfall, use *invisibility*, or are heavily camouflaged (either magically, such as by a *cloak of elvenkind*, or by psionic abilities such as Chameleon Power or False

Sensory Input), they can approach the tower unnoticed. If the stair guards are silently incapacitated by spells or psionics, the PCs surprise the guards in area 2 on a roll of 1-6 on 1d10.

Guards, human (2): AL N; AC 7; MV 12; F2; hp 11 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 11; leather armor, wooden shield, bone spear, wooden club.

2. Colonnade.

> The stairs lead up to this roofless veranda. Spaced evenly across the terrace are large columns of white granite worked and sculpted into the shapes of shade trees. The granite has been carved with great effort and detail to produce a lifelike stone forest. The great tree sculptures cast enormous shadows.

The huge, sculpted pillars reach skyward to a height of 40'. They shade the veranda almost completely except at noon. At midday, the individual pillars cast circles of darkness around themselves while the merciless sun beats down white and hot.

During daylight hours, the shadows in the veranda seem darker and deeper than normal. This is a natural illusion caused by the sun's bright light striking the white surface of the granite. The natural brightness glaring off the white surface makes any shaded areas near it appear abnormally dark. This optical illusion has the following effects on combat: attackers in the shadows surprise defenders in the sun on a roll of 1-4 on 1d10, and anyone standing in the shadows is treated as 25% hidden (attack rolls at −1). The shadows offer concealment, not cover, but can be combined with other forms of concealment and cover for a cumulative effect (see page 62 of the *DMG*). The shadows have no effect on infravision.

Standing guard in the shade of the sculpted pillars are three **gith soldiers** (hp 14 each, see area 5 for complete gith statistics) and a **gith lieutenant** (hp 22). Lieutenant's Sciences: Tower of Iron Will, Project Force, Telekinesis. Devotions: Id Insinuation, Mind Thrust, Contact, Psychic Messenger, Mental Barrier, Animate Object, Animate Shadow, Ballistic Attack, Control Body, Control Flames; Def Modes: M-, MB, TW; Power Score 16; 80 PSPs.

If the PCs attempt to negotiate with the lieutenant, it pretends to listen. In fact, it is using its Psychic Messenger ability to call the human guards from area 3. When the guards arrive, the gith attacks and attempts to capture as many of the PCs as possible. If capture is impossible, it attempts to kill the PCs. If the battle goes against the gith lieutenant, it uses its Psychic Messenger to summon its kindred from area 5.

Among the pillars of the colonnade is an odd weapon (marked with an X on the map). The gith have tied four erdlu legs to a large, heavy, obsidian-headed spear. The gith lieutenant uses the psychokinetic devotion Animate Object to use the urdlu spear as a weapon. Treat the erdlu spear as dead animal material on the Animate Object Table on page 42 of *The Complete Psionics Handbook* (*CPH*).

In combat, the legged spear is a horror, scuttling jerkily about like a sick spider (movement rate 6). It attacks (THAC0 20) with four clawed feet for 1-4 hp damage per claw, or once with the spearhead for 1d6 − 1 hp damage. Because this object has been specially

created for use as a psychokinetic weapon, ignore the "attacks as a club" rule on page 42 of the *CPH*. Victims rammed by the spearhead must make a Dexterity check or be knocked down and clawed for an additional 1-4 hp damage.

The spearhead is a gith weapon and slashes rather than stabs or pierces. At the DM's discretion, the gith lieutenant may use it to slash and ruin the PCs' waterskins or spell component pouches rather than attack a PC directly. The erdlu-legged spear takes 8 hp damage before being rendered useless.

If a fight takes place in this area, the humans in the Great Hall (area 3) hear the noise and arrive, as a group, in 1d6 + 4 rounds. In addition, the gith from area 5 arrive in 1d10 + 10 rounds. Any PCs who are captured undergo psionic questioning by either the Chanth or the gith. (What the Chanth learns from any captured PC depends greatly on the psionic strength of the PCs involved and is left to the DM's discretion.) If the PCs can silently overcome the guards in the colonnade, they surprise the humans in area 3 on a roll of 1-6 on 1d10.

3. Great Hall. Depending what happens in areas 1 and 2, the PCs may encounter guards and Flockmaster Wren in this area. Include any NPCs the adventuring party might see in the following description:

> Entering this large hall, you see four slender pillars reaching upward toward a nonexistent roof. The encircling wall is an uneven, roofless, broken crown. Because it is open to the sky, the room is extremely dusty. The stone floor is covered with fine silt and debris. A stairway mounts the northern side of the room but leads only to a watchpost overlooking the wall. The southern wall holds another stairway leading downward. Tumbled stones are jumbled against the western wall.
>
> Eight wind howdahs hover just to the north of the crumbling rock pile. The howdahs are unmanned and unburdened. A hodge-podge of tools, equipment, and clutter lies south of the stones.

During daylight hours, the **sentry** (hp 11) in the watchpost on the northern wall spots any attempt by PCs to approach the tower on foot or by wind howdah from the north, west, or south. If the PCs are spotted, the tower guards ready themselves and are prepared by the time the PCs arrive. The PCs can avoid detection as described in area 1.

The guardpost is equipped with a light crossbow, 12 bone-tipped light quarrels (Dmg 1d4 – 1), and 12 poison-tipped wooden quarrels (Dmg 1d4 – 2). The crossbow and arrows remain at the post and are not carried by the guard on duty. The arrows are tainted with Type O poison (see *DMG*, page 73). If fighting occurs in area 3 or intruders attempt to enter the area, the guard attacks with the poison quarrels first.

The Great Hall houses the Chanth's human thralls. They are a mixed company of captured caravan guards and members of the island's douar. Flockmaster Wren, the lost member of the douar triumvirate, is also here.

Flockmaster Wren: AL N; AC 10; MV 12; Psi4; hp 14; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 12, D 10, C 16, I 16, W 17, Ch 12; ML 20 (Chanth controlled) or 14 (normally); bone knife (Dmg 1d4 – 1), bone club.

Psionic Sciences: Precognition, Complete Healing; Devotions: All-round Vision, Combat Mind, Danger Sense, Absorb Disease, Biofeedback, Body Control, Flesh Armor, Lend Health, Mind Over Body; Def Modes: M-, TS; PSPs 62.

Wren was the master of the islanders' erdlu flocks. The Chanth keeps continual Domination over Wren and uses him to relay orders to the other slaves. Because the Chanth is always in control of Wren, attacks on the Flockmaster automatically notify the creature that intruders have arrived. If it is aware of intruders, the Chanth cannot be surprised.

Under Chanth control, Wren fights intruders to the best of his abilities, and to the death. If the heroes kill the Flockmaster, the islanders will be very upset. There is a 50% chance they revoke the PCs' welcome, 75% chance if PCs have done nothing about the thicket outpost. If the welcome is revoked, the PCs are ostracized by the douar. This means the party receives no help, no water, and no food from the villagers.

In addition, because he is an unwilling pawn of the Chanth, the PCs receive no experience points for killing Wren. If the PCs capture Wren alive and return him to Darktarn, the party receives a bonus of 400 XP, and Wren informs the douar of the dangers of the tower. With this information, Wren and eight volunteers (use flock guard statistics) agree to fight alongside the PCs. However, they do not take orders from the PCs and do not allow themselves to be used on obvious suicide missions or as bait.

Human guards (25): AL N; AC 7; MV 12; F2; hp 11 (avg); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 20 or 11; leather armor, wooden shield, bone spear, wooden club.

The guards include 15 islanders and 10 captured caravan soldiers. The douar guards and caravan guards do the gith's bidding out of fear. The gith punish disobedience severely with physical and psionic torture. In combat, guards fighting out of fear have normal morale. Occasionally, the gith psionically Dominate a human for a suicidal attack. Psionically controlled individuals are fearless and fight with a morale of 20 until killed or released from psionic control.

Because the human guards are the unwilling slaves of the Chanth, the DM should not give experience points for any guards the PCs are forced to kill. However, PCs receive a 50-XP bonus for every islander or caravan guard they free from psionic control and return to Darktarn or Altaruk.

If the guards are dealt with, closer inspection of the debris on the floor reveals a collection of pallets, bedrolls, and a motley collection of old clothes and footwear. The adventurers find well-worn boots, ragged sandals, tattered tunics, and threadbare shirts and pants. A search through these belongings reveals nothing of value.

The hall's roof collapsed ages ago but left four of its supporting pillars standing. The pillars are not as ornate or as tall as those of the colonnade (area 2). They are broken remnants that stand 20'-30' tall.

The roof and part of the tower collapsed into rubble against the western wall. If the PCs inspect the pile of rocks and make a successful concealed doors check, they find three loose stones that can be lifted away easily to expose a large, hidden alcove. The alcove holds the raider's recent booty: 50 bottles of perfume worth a total of 250 ceramic pieces (cp), five ornate wooden sun dials worth 50 cp each, 40 bolts of cloth worth 50 cp each, and eight carved bone harps worth 20 gp each because each is strung with metal strings. Unfortunately for

the PCs, all this booty belongs to the merchant houses of Altaruk. If the adventurers honor their contract and return the goods, they receive a 2,000-cp finder's fee.

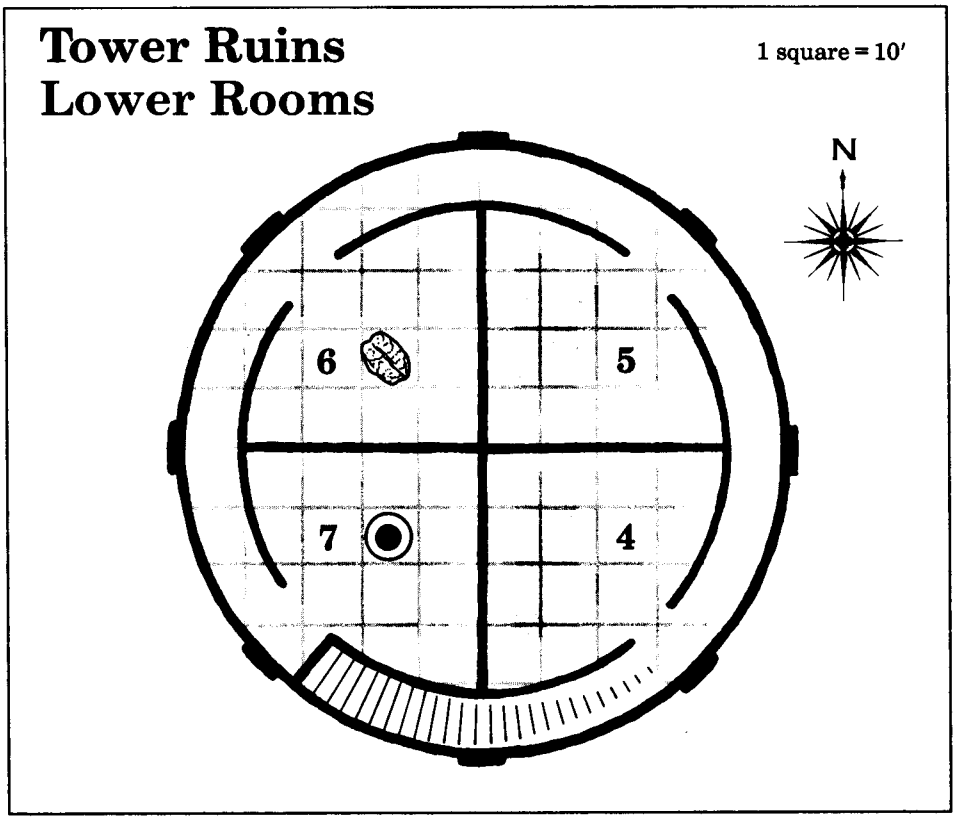
If PCs sort out the tangled equipment south of the stones, they find it is primarily tools: shovels, picks, trowels, and assorted carpentry and masonry tools. In addition, there are five 50′ coils of rope, a block and tackle, three 10′ ladders, and assorted sacks, bags, buckets, and baskets. This room is the cluttered staging area in preparation for rebuilding the tower, because the Chanth wishes to protect his slaves and minions. This is not kind-heartedness on the part of the creature; it regards the rebuilding as a farmer does the raising of a barn to protect his animals.

The hovering wind howdahs to the north of the cairn may be used by the PCs to escape should a fight turn against them. The PCs can simply board the howdahs and *levitate* out of the Great Hall. The tower walls rise to 50′ at their highest point at the watchpost and dip suddenly to 30′ at the lowest point above the stairs of the southern wall. Once above the protective walls of the tower, the wind howdahs are subject to the winds of Athas (see the "Wind Howdah" sidebar).

Unless PCs destroy the remaining wind howdahs, the gith and human guards pursue them to any location on the island, but do not pursue beyond its shores. The Chanth fears the PCs may attempt to lead its slaves into a trap that may destroy the slaves and the wind howdahs. Once the PCs leave the island, the Chanth recalls its slaves from the pursuit.

Tower Lower Rooms

The lower rooms are cool and dusty. While never completely filled with silt, the lower rooms have never been completely cleaned either. They are heavily coated with the choking particles of dust. The floor of the main circular corridor is fairly free of silt because it is a well traveled walkway. However, the walls of the corridor are heavily coated with silt. Brushing or bumping into either wall of this tunnel releases a 10′ × 10′ cloud of dust. Anyone caught in the dust cloud must save vs. poison or sneeze and cough for 2-8 rounds. Because concentration is thoroughly disrupted by the coughing and sneezing fit, spell-casters and psionicists cannot cast spells or use psionic abilities for the fit's duration. The coughing and sneezing also attracts the attention of the gith in area 5, who investigate the noise in 1d4 + 2 rounds.



4. Food Storage.

> Immediately upon entering this room, you notice it has a cleaner, less dusty smell than the others. The room seems well used and is filled with a number of sacks, bags, kegs, and boxes containing foodstuffs. The many sacks and bags contain a large number of varied foods and victuals, from erdlu eggs to kank-honey globules.

The room contains 30 erdlu eggs, 20 globules of kank honey, 15 kegs of salted erdlu meat taken from caravans, and several bags and sacks of various fruits, vegetables, peas, and beans. Several glazed clay cooking pots are scattered about the room.

5. Gith Quarters.

> This room appears to be a rough barracks. Several pallets lie on the floor, and an assortment of ragged, tattered clothing is scattered throughout the room. An odd collection of weapons is stacked neatly along the south wall.

This room is used exclusively by the gith as their private quarters and is seldom empty. Unless the PCs have either dealt with the gith or drawn them away from the room, they find the room occupied by both soldiers and officers.

Gith soldiers (6): INT average; AL CE; AC 6; MV 10; HD 3; hp 14; THAC0 17; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg by weapon type or 1-4/1-4; SA springing; ML 12; XP 175; MM/151 or WJ/93; bone spear.

Gith leaders (3): HD 5; hp 22; THAC0 15; SA springing, psionics; SD psionics; XP 420; other statistics as for gith soldiers, above. Psionic Sciences: Tower of Iron Will, Project Force, Telekinesis; Devotions: Id Insinuation, Mind Thrust, Contact, Mind Blank, Mental Barrier, Animate Object, Animate Shadow,

Ballistic Attack, Control Body, Control Flames; Def Modes: M-, MB, TW; Power Score 16; 80 PSPs.

Optional: Rather than give each gith leader the same PSPs and psionic abilities, roll 1d100 for each leader. Subtract 1-10 PSPs from those leaders rolling 50 or less and add 1-10 PSPs to those leaders exceeding a roll of 50. Use the following Sciences and Devotions as alternatives to those listed. Sciences: Detonate, Disintegrate, Domination, Probe; Devotions: Inertial Barrier, Molecular Agitation, Molecular Manipulation, False Sensory Input, Inflict Pain, Invisibility.

Gith captain: HD 7; hp 31; THAC0 13; SA springing, psionics; SD psionics; XP 975; bone spear; other statistics as for gith soldiers, above. Psionic Sciences: Telekinesis, Death Field, Mindlink; Devotions: Animate Object, Animate Shadow, Inertial Barrier, Levitation, Aging, Cause Decay, Flesh Armor, Heightened Senses, Contact, Id Insinuation, Mind Thrust, Send Thoughts; Def Modes: IF, MB, M-, TW; Power Score 16; PSPs 100.

The Chanth's gith allies are the surviving remnants of the tribe that once dwelt in the island's mountains. They lived by raiding the humans' erdlu flocks and the giants' kank hives. The giants finally put an end to the raids by literally pounding the gith's underground mountain lair into dust. The gith tribe was decimated by the giant attack and, without a lair to retreat to, rapidly lost members. Both the humans and the giants slowly harried the gith to the southern tip of the island, where the tribe would soon have been driven into the Sea of Silt if the Chanth had not rescued them.

The Chanth had no need to Dominate or attack the homeless gith. When the gith discovered the Chanth, they bowed to the thing as if it were a god and asked it to deliver them from their enemies. The Chanth enslaved or destroyed the humans who attacked the gith in the tower ruins. Although the Chanth did this for its own reasons, the gith were delivered and have become fanatical slaves of their new "deity." The Chanth only needs to use Send Thoughts or Psychic Messenger, and the gith unhesitatingly obey.

If the PCs defeat the gith and inspect the area, they find all the weapons are made for gith: 12 wicked obsidian gith spears (Dmg 1d6 – 1), 10 stone gith daggers (Dmg 1d4 – 1), and eight gith bone short swords (Dmg 1d6 – 1).

Gith have only three fingers and no opposable thumb, so bladed weapons used by gith are easy to spot. The short swords and daggers have three large holes in the handle and are spiked down the outer side (much like brass knuckles). A gith inserts its three fingers through the holes for a better grip and control of the weapon. This also gives the gith the option of punching an opponent with the spiked handle for 1-4 hp damage rather than stabbing or slashing with the blade.

Non-gith have trouble wielding these weapons because of their special handles. Any non-gith using a gith dagger or short sword suffers –1 to attack and damage rolls, in addition to any other penalty the weapon may have. Gith spears may be used without additional penalties. Bladed gith weapons must be refitted with normal handles and grips before they can be resold. The entire weapons hoard is worth only 50 cp.

If PCs search the pallets and clothing, they find 2 cp per turn of careful searching (30 cp maximum). In addition, the adventurers can remove dozens of decorative beads, ornamental buttons, and small strips of dyed and worked leather from the clothing. In all, there are 40 cp worth of such decorative items.

6. Chamber of the Chanth.

> Among the dust and debris that covers the floor of this room, you notice several of the sharp-edged thri-kreen throwing wedges called chatkchas. In the center of the chamber, a large glass sphere squats like an enormous crystal ball, its lower quarter hidden beneath the floor. The glass enclosure is filled with a pale yellow-green translucent liquid. There appears to be an indistinct blob of matter floating in the center of the liquid. As you peer at it, you realize the mass looks like a gigantic brain.
>
> Standing near the sphere, as if waiting for your arrival, are three humans. Their eyes are unfocused, as if they were listening to music no one else can hear. The foremost of the three raises both hands, palms outward in a sign of peace and announces, "Welcome, travelers. We are the Chanth, lord of this domain." His voice sounds very odd, as if many voices were speaking through a single person.

The plurality of voices coming from a single individual should give the PCs a hint that they are not facing a single entity, but a multifaceted creature. Also, whenever the Chanth speaks, it refers to itself as "we." The PCs may mistake the odd voice for a Control Sound ability, and they may think that the creature is using the royal "we" to refer to itself.

The three humans are captured psionic wild talents, kept in perpetual Mindlink with the Chanth and completely Dominated by it. Their morale is 20 while enslaved but reverts to the number in parentheses if they are freed. As these men are mere pawns of the Chanth, the DM is advised not to give experience points for their destruction. Each of the following NPCs freed from Chanth control is worth 200 XP.

Voice of the Chanth: AL LN; AC 8; MV 12; B4; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 14, D 13, C 16, I 15, W 17, Ch 16; CW 54%, DN 31%, PP 32%, RL 33%; SA/SD psionics, spells; ML 20 (12); leather armor, bone short sword (1d6 – 1), bone dagger. Psionic Devotions: Body Weaponry; PS 13; PSPs 41.

If Identity Penetration is used, the psionicist discovers that the Voice of the Chanth is really Olandin of Tyr, a bard. Olandin was on a journey to the city of Gulg when he was captured by the raiders. Though he speaks for the Chanth, he still has the full persuasive abilities of a bard (regardless of how many voices seem to be coming from him). The Voice answers all questions in the Chanth's name, even those directed at the other two humans. The odd-sounding voice may not be repeated every time the Chanth speaks. Except for the initial introduction, only one mind at a time speaks through the bard. If released from the Chanth's control, Olandin gladly joins the fight against the creature.

Eyes of the Chanth: AL NE; AC 10; MV 12; M4; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 8, D 13, C 12, I 14, W 16, Ch 8; ML 20 (10); stone dagger (Dmg 1d4 – 1). Spells: *color spray, detect magic, magic missile; blindness, darkness 15' radius.* Psionic Devotions: All Around Vision; PS 13; PSPs 38.

Identity Penetration reveals that the Eyes of the Chanth is really Kar'fan Aawl, a mage. Before his capture, Aawl was posing as a caravan guard, but in fact he is a defiler who now serves as the Chanth's eyes. If the Chanth wishes to

examine an object, it uses Kar'fan. If he is released from control, the defiler seeks only to escape the Chanth and the island. However, if his escape route passes near any treasure, equipment, or supplies owned by the PCs, he gladly steals them as he goes.

Hands of the Chanth: AL NG; AC 8; MV 12; T6; hp 21; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA backstab at +4 to hit for triple damage; S 13, D 15, C 12, I 14, W 15, Ch 11; PP 20%, OL 31%, FT 69%, MS 26%, HS 21%, DN 21%, CW 60%, RL 87%; ML 20 (12); leather armor, bone short sword. Psionic Science: Object Reading; PS 10; PSPs 40.

The Hands of the Chanth was called Dree the Reader before being captured and brought to the island. Dree is a thief who he made his living deciphering old maps, scrolls, hieroglyphics, and journals for other thieves rather than actually doing any stealing himself. If released from the Chanth, Dree gladly joins the PCs and helps fight the creature that enslaved him.

The Chanth: INT supra-genius; AL NE; AC 10; MV 0; HD 10; hp 50; THAC0 nil; #AT 1 to 5; Dmg nil; S nil, D nil, C 18, I 21, W 18, Ch 5 (20); SA/SD psionics; SZ M; ML 20; XP 4,000. Psionics: see "Chanth Minds List" sidebar; Power Score 16; PSPs 200.

The Chanth is a single entity composed of several minds. For ease of reference, the minds are numbered 1 through 5 on the "Chanth Minds List" (see sidebar). The list is merely a device to help keep track of the Chanth's abilities, a scorecard for combat. Each mind has different properties, different abilities, and a personality separate from the others. The dominant personality is the Chanth, the whole, the one brain of many minds.

The Chanth is overbearingly arrogant. It has little regard for the puny intelligence of any other creature or (as it sees things) their pathetically insignificant psionic powers. The Chanth's Charisma depends on who views the creature. To most humans and demihumans it has a Charisma of 5, but to the gith its Charisma is 20.

In combat, the Chanth follows a simple course of action. First, using Mindlink, Send Thoughts, and the Voice of the Chanth, it attempts to delude opponents by promising power, wealth, and glory, and by claiming to be a beneficent and well-meaning creature. It offers to make the PCs lords of its domain if they agree to willingly serve it. Of course, these are all lies; the Chanth has no intention of sharing power with anyone. It merely wants more slaves.

Negotiating with the Chanth is very strange. It carries on conversations with the PCs, but its component minds also discusses the situation among themselves. The minds' argument with each other is often vocalized through the Voice of the Chanth. Emphasize the Voice's odd multiple personality to the players by allowing first one mind and then another to vocalize contradictory opinions.

Use the following as a guide to role-playing the disjointed and often garbled speech of the Chanth. Because the minds have different things to say rather than the same proclamation, the minds speak one at a time rather than in unison, as they did when the PCs first entered the chamber. The DM should change vocal tone from pleasant to bored to demanding and back again to give the players a clue to the shifting personalities speaking through the Voice. Different expressions and body language should accompany each voice.

One easy, dramatic (and sometimes amusing) way to show a different mind speaking is for the DM to begin speaking into the air to his left then suddenly turn and speak into the air to his right as the new mind takes over. The constant turning back and forth gives the PCs an idea of what type of mind they are dealing with.

The Voice starts pleasantly:

> "We offer you safety, food, and water. Serve us and you will receive wealth beyond your wildest dreams."

The facial features of the Voice of the Chanth suddenly change into a kind of bored, weary snarl.

> "Let's just dominate them and have done with it. I don't see the point of discussing the matter with them."

This starts a disagreement among the minds. They begin arguing with each other, and the argument spills forth through the Voice of the Chanth. For a moment, the poor bard looks dazed, as if he had just received a blow to the head. As the minds of the Chanth all attempt

to control him, the bard goes through multiple facial changes and tones of voice. Each sentence ending with —— means a different mind has taken over and the DM should use a new voice, expression, and body language when continuing:

> "Why don't you mind your own business? I'm the one negotiating with these people, I should——You should! You always want to do everything your way! If it hadn't been for me, we never would have killed the wizard who did this to us. We should——Oh! Be quiet! You're always rehashing that wizard business. That was the last good idea you had. Well, I'm sick of it! Let him do what he wants. He——You're always on his side!——I am not! One time he——Would you two please keep it down!——Excuse me! We have guests, remember?——I'm sorry, but he's always saying I'm——You are! Remember the time he wanted——EXCUSE ME! WE HAVE GUESTS!——All right! No need to shout. But, he's always saying I'm——"

At this point the Voice of the Chanth seems to shiver and struggle with some internal pain, then stands erect once again and with a calm expression on his face, pleasantly asks the PCs: "Now, where were we?" Such arguing and bickering among the minds may break out at any time during negotiations. The DM can use it to relay fragments of information to the PCs about the Chanth's history or current intentions.

If negotiation fails (which seems likely), the creature immediately attempts to psionically enslave intruders with Dominate or Mass Domination. Finally, if enslavement proves difficult or the intruders attack the Chanth, the creature tries to destroy them. Once engaged in combat, it fights to the death. Under no conditions does the Chanth surrender or serve the PCs.

Combating the Chanth

Before the heroes engage the Chanth in combat, the DM should decide which mind does what to help avoid delays (see the "Chanth Minds List" sidebar). To move the combat along smoothly, decide which mind controls which NPC, what psionic ability each mind is using, etc.

In combat, one mind is destroyed for every 10 points of damage the Chanth

Chanth Minds List

The following five minds make up the entity known as the Chanth. For a random determination, roll 1d10 and consult the following values: 1-2 = Mind 1, 3-4 = Mind 2, etc.

Mind 1: A human mind with Empower, Energy Containment, Gird, Flesh Armor, Prolong, and Suspend Animation abilities. This mind supplies 38 PSPs to the Chanth's PSP pool.

Mind 2: A dwarven mind with Domination, Telekinesis, Animate Object, Levitation, Mind Bar, and Psychic Messenger abilities. 40 PSPs.

Mind 3: An elven mind with Mass Domination, Mind Wipe, Awe, ESP, Inflict Pain, and Phobia Amplification abilities. 44 PSPs.

Mind 4: A halfling mind with Fate Link, Probe, Attraction, Aversion, Send Thoughts, and Sight Link abilities. 41 PSPs.

Mind 5: A thri-kreen mind with Precognition, Ejection, Combat Mind, Danger Sense, False Sensory Input, and Sound Link abilities. 37 PSPs.

Combat Sequence: In combat, the Chanth follows no particular course of action. Because of constant wrangling and disagreements over strategy, the minds attack individually or in pairs rather than as a group. The DM may devise his own battle plan for the Chanth or use the following as a sample of the creature's initial actions:

Round 1

Mind 1 Converges with Mind 3 and gains access to Inflict Pain ability (PSP cost = 0).

Mind 2 immediately uses Telekinesis to send one of the chatkchas lying on the floor of the room flying at a random PC. The attack is made with a THAC0 of 20 (2nd-level psionicist) and does normal damage if it hits. (Because all minds are Mindlinked, Mind 2 knows where the PCs are through the Sight Link that Mind 4 has with the Eyes of the Chanth. PSP cost = 3).

Mind 3 is using Mass Domination over the Hands, Voice, and Eyes of the Chanth. It begins moving the Hands and Voice into positions where they can backstab PCs (because of the many variables of battle, this may be impossible; the DM may just have them attack the nearest PCs). The mind has the Eyes cast his *magic missile* spell at a single PC (PSP cost = 28 for all three minions or 8 PSPs each for the Voice and Eyes of the Chanth and 12 PSPs for the Hands). The mind attacks with the minions even if only one minion is available. If all three minions are unavailable for any reason (killed, subdued, entangled in a *web*, etc.), the mind attempts to Contact and Mindwipe a PC (PSP cost = 11 for victims of 4th or 5th level, 16 for victims of 6th or 7th level).

Mind 4 attempts to Contact and use its Aversion ability on a PC (DM's choice; PSP cost = 11 if victim is of 4th or 5th level, 16 if victim is of 6th or 7th level).

Mind 5 uses its Combat Mind ability to gain an understanding of the PCs and their tactics (PSP cost = 9).

Round 2

Mind 1 immediately attempts to Contact and use Inflict Pain on a PC (PSP cost = 5 if victim is of 4th or 5th level, 10 if victim is of 6th or 7th level).

Mind 2 continues to attack with chatkchas (PSP cost = 3). If the Eyes of the Chanth has been blinded (knocked out, *blindness* or *darkness* spell), Mind 2 Converges with Mind 3 and gains access to the Phobia Amplification ability (PSP cost = 0).

Mind 3 continues attacking through its minions. The Voice casts his *sleep* spell, and the Eyes casts his *color spray* spell. The Hands can either backstab, if he is in position to do so, or continue to attack normally (PSP cost = 28). If the minions are unavailable, see Round 1. If the mind used a Mindwipe on a PC in the first round, it continues the ability (PSP cost = 9).

Mind 4 continues to use its Aversion ability (PSP cost = 1). The PSP cost for Aversion is 8 per turn, not per round. The cost listed here is the 1 PSP required to maintain Contact. If the mind failed to Contact a victim the first round, it attempts to Contact and use Aversion against another victim (DM's choice) this round (PSP cost = 11 if victim is 4th or 5th level, 16 if victim is 6th or 7th level).

Mind 5 attempts to Contact a PC and use its False Sensory Input ability. The false input used depends on the PC Contacted. A PC fighting with a weapon may believe that his sword handle feels like it's coming loose from the blade, the handle of a club or war hammer seems cracked, or a spearhead appears very blunt. Affected PCs stop attacking and change weapons.

A spell-casting PC feels the sweat on her body and the saliva in her mouth become very gooey and sticky. She feels so hindered that it is impossible to cast spells with verbal or somatic components. A psionicist PC sees the chatkchas on the floor flying at him. The psionicist has a difficult time concentrating while dodging what he thinks are thri-kreen weapons coming at him (PSP cost = 7 for 4th- or 5th-level victims, 12 for 6th- or 7th-level victims).

Round 3

Mind 1 continues to Inflict Pain on a PC (PSP cost = 2). If the initial attempt at Contact failed, Mind 1 attempts to Contact and Inflict Pain on another PC (PSP cost = 5 for a 4th- or 5th-level target, 10 for a 6th- or 7th-level target).

Mind 2 continues to attack by Telekinesing new chatkchas (PSP cost = 3). If the Sight Link was lost and the mind now has Phobia Amplification, it attempts to Contact and use that ability on a PC (PSP cost = 7 for 4th- or 5th-level targets, 12 for 6th- or 7th-level targets). If the Sight Link was lost after round 2, the mind uses the Convergence ability and gains access to the Phobia Amplification ability of Mind 3 (PSP cost = 0).

Mind 3 continues to attack with the minions if they are still available. The Voice of the Chanth uses Body Weaponry to attack. This costs the Voice 13 PSPs. The Eyes casts his *blindness* spell on a PC. The Hands continues to attack with his short sword (PSP cost is 28 total, 8 each for the Eyes and Voice, 12 for the Hands). If the minions are unavailable for use, see round 1. If the minions are unavailable and Mind 3 was unable to establish Contact and use Mindwipe ability in the last round, that mind attempts to do so on another PC this round (PSP cost = 11 for 4th- or 5th-level victims, 16 for 6th- or 7th-level victims). If the mind was already using its Mindwipe ability, it continues the attack (PSP cost = 9).

Mind 4 continues to use its Aversion ability (PSP cost = 1). If the mind failed to Contact a victim in the last round, it attempts to Contact and use Aversion against another victim this round (PSP cost = 11 if victim is of 4th or 5th level, 16 if victim is of 6th or 7th level).

Mind 5 continues to use its False Sensory Input ability (PSP cost = 4). If the mind failed to establish Contact and use False Sensory Input in the previous round, it tries again this round (PSP cost = 7 for victims of 4th or 5th level, 12 for victims of 6th or 7th level).

No set of guidelines can take into account the fortunes of war or the luck of the dice. If a particular course of action has been rendered impossible by the course of battle, ignore it. Also, consider incorporating the following alternatives to the combat guidelines:

1. If one of the Chanth's minds notices a psionicist or spell-caster PC, either through the mind's Contact with the PC or the PC's Contact with the mind, the mind immediately launches a telepathic attack (usually Psychic Crush or Mind Thrust). The ensuing psychic contest is played out (see *CPH*, pages 22-24).
2. If the Sight Link with the Eyes of the Chanth is broken, Mind 3 immediately orders that minion to cast his *darkness 15' radius* spell in an attempt to level the playing field.
3. If two of the Chanth's minds are destroyed, Mind 4 immediately Fate Links with a PC.
4. If the PCs retreat to area 7, Mind 5 attempts to establish Contact and Sound Link with the ustilagor in that area. If the Sound Link is established, the Chanth hears every word the PCs speak to one another while they are in area 7.

Optional Chanth PSP Calculation Method: Once a mind is destroyed, it can no longer supply PSPs to the pool. However, those PSPs supplied before its destruction remain in the pool and available to the other minds. When one of the minds is destroyed or incapacitated, subtract only a percentage of the PSPs used rather than the entire total listed. To arrive at the percentage of PSPs used, the DM must keep a running total of the Chanth's current PSPs. The current total is divided by the original 200 to arrive at the percentage (round .5 or more upward). That percentage is then used to calculate exactly how many PSPs are lost when a mind is destroyed.

For example: the Chanth uses its psionic abilities and reduces its pool of PSPs to 150. When Mind 2 is destroyed, the DM divides 150 by 200 and arrives at .75. Therefore, the Chanth retains (or has not yet used) 30 of the 40 PSPs supplied by Mind 2 but loses (or has used) the other 10 PSPs. While this method keeps a more accurate running total of PSPs for the Chanth, it is time consuming and tends to slow the game.

takes. If a mind is killed or incapacitated, the DM can choose the mind eliminated or roll on the "Chanth Minds List." Every time a mind is killed or incapacitated, the Chanth loses the psionic abilities and the psionic strength points contributed to the whole by that mind.

For example, if a *lightning bolt* destroys Mind 1, the Chanth loses 38 PSPs and the use of the psionic sciences Empower and Energy Containment and the devotions Gird, Flesh Armor, Prolong, and Suspend Animation (see *Optional Chanth PSP Calculation Method* on page 49).

If another mind is using one of these abilities (through the creature's natural Convergence ability) when a mind is destroyed or incapacitated, the ability is instantly cut off and the borrowing mind is *feebleminded* (as the fifth-level wizard's spell) for one round. If Mind 2 is using the Prolong ability of Mind 1 when Mind 1 is destroyed by a *lightning bolt*, the Prolong ability instantly ceases and Mind 2 is *feebleminded* for one round. The PSPs and abilities provided by Mind 2 are no longer available to the whole while it is *feebleminded*. If another mind is using an ability from Mind 2 when it is *feebleminded*, it too is *feebleminded* for one round.

This is a very dangerous situation for the Chanth. If several minds are Converged and borrowing abilities from each other when one is incapacitated or destroyed, a chain reaction can take place, *feebleminding* the entire Chanth.

The Chanth can personally engage in psionic combat or can force a Dominated psionic character to use his abilities as the Chanth sees fit. However, all physical and spell attacks must be done by proxy through Dominated minions and slaves.

Each mind contributes a number of PSPs to a pool of PSPs (see the "Chanth Minds List" for the exact number of PSPs contributed by each mind). As an analogy, consider the Chanth a power company with five power plants. Each of the plants is "on line" and supplies the company as a whole with a certain amount of power. If one of the plants is destroyed or stops producing power and goes "off line" for any reason, the company as a whole loses that much power.

The PSP pool is open to each individual mind. Remember, however, that the Chanth is not just one creature making up its mind, but five minds deciding

what to do. Because the psionic strength points of the creature are available to each individual mind, it is impossible for one mind to rule the others.

Luckily for the PCs, the Chanth does not turn its massive psionic potential against a single target in direct combat (unless there is only a single target to attack, of course). If it could do so, it would literally wither any mind coming against it. (The last time it did so was against Mardak.) Instead, the minds of the Chanth attack several targets at once, diffusing the attack by reducing the amount of psionic energy it can bring against any one target. Therefore, while 200 PSPs may seem a huge number for the PCs to be up against, the creature is actually attacking as five different minds with approximately 40 PSPs apiece.

In addition, because several minds are draining the PSP pool simultaneously, it is possible that a mind or minds may be unable to initiate or maintain an ability because the PSP pool has been exhausted. In this case, the Chanth is helpless until it can recover a few psionic strength points.

Psionic combat is the Chanth's main arena of conflict. The minds use Contact, Mind Link, and Convergence among themselves at no cost in PSPs to initiate or maintain. These abilities are not automatic, and the preparation time for each remains as listed in the *CPH*. (The Chanth does not continually maintain these abilities because of the danger of being suddenly *feebleminded* by a surprise attack. Also, because of the continual bickering among the minds, some minds prefer to shut themselves off from the others.) If used on another creature, these abilities cost PSPs and function normally.

If not using a psionic ability, each mind recovers its psionic strength points at the "resting" rate (see *CPH*, page 14). It is possible for one mind of the Chanth to rest and recover PSPs for the creature's PSP pool while another mind is using a psionic ability and draining the pool of PSPs.

Psionic abilities requiring touch are useless against the creature unless the special sphere is destroyed. In addition, the Aging, Double Pain, and Identity Penetration abilities are useless against the Chanth. As long as its sphere is intact the Chanth is immortal, so Aging is useless. Although the brain is the center of pain reception, it has no pain receptors itself, so it feels no pain that can be doubled. Inflict Pain does work against the Chanth, so long as the Chanth can be touched. This ability activates the pain centers in the Chanth's large amount of gray matter in the same way that the Sight Link ability activates the visual centers of the creature's minds or Sound Link activates the hearing centers. The powerful magic that created the Chanth destroyed the true identities of the minds comprising the creature and makes Identity Penetration an exercise in futility. The minds have separate personalities, but not identities.

All minds of the Chanth can use all five attack and defense modes at normal cost in PSPs. Psionic attack and defense modes are treated as attacks on the individual minds rather than an attack on the entire entity. If a PC attempts to use a psionic attack such as Ego Whip, the DM should choose or roll randomly on the "Chanth Minds List" to determine which mind is being attacked. The mind under attack may use any of the psionic defense modes to protect itself. Psionic attacks on the Chanth's minds have the same effect as on any other mind.

As with spell-incapacitated minds, if a mind is borrowing an ability from a mind that is psionically incapacitated (by Id Insinuation for instance), the borrowing mind is *feebleminded* for one round. Any of the Chanth's minds may use any psionic attack mode on the PCs.

Spell combat: The Chanth uses psionicist saving throws against spells (*CPH*, page 15). The Chanth's level varies depending on the type of spell used. For spells affecting a single creature, such as *charm person, spook,* etc., the minds roll individual saving throws as 2-HD creatures or 2nd-level psionicists. For spells affecting a large area or creatures in an area, such as *taunt, scare*, etc., the Chanth rolls as a 10-HD creature or 10th-level psionicist.

The creature's great Intelligence makes it immune to illusions of third level or less. Also, the Chanth must use its Sight Link ability before it can even see an illusion, so for all practical purposes, treat the Chanth as immune to spells such as *phantasmal force, hypnotic pattern*, etc. Minions or slaves Mindlinked to the Chanth are immune because the creature can inform the slave of the illusion.

Because the Chanth is one large brain composed of five different minds, the most effective spells a spell-caster can use against the creature are those affecting the mind. For spells affecting an area or the creature as a whole and requiring an Intelligence, Constitution, or Wisdom check, use the ability scores listed for the Chanth on page 47. However, for spells affecting an individual mind and requiring similar checks, use the Chanth's Power Score (16) in place of Intelligence, Constitution, or Wisdom. The spells *charm person, charm person or mammal, and suggestion* work against the Chanth, but only one of the five minds is affected by each *charm* or *suggestion* spell. If a spell-caster uses one of these spells against the Chanth, the DM should roll 1d10 and consult the "Chanth Minds List" to determine which mind is affected. If the roll indicates the thri-kreen mind, *charm* spells fail (see pages 90 and 95 of the *Rules Book*). Unless communication is possible through Mindlink, Send Thoughts, or some other means, the spell-caster cannot *suggest* a course of action the mind should take. The *charmed* or *suggested* mind is incapacitated, and its psionic abilities are no longer available to the other minds; its PSPs are still part of the pool.

Other mind-affecting spells have odd effects on the Chanth. If the spells *cause fear, irritation,* or *spook* are used against the Chanth, one mind per spell is incapacitated (roll or choose randomly on the "Chanth Minds List"). If *scare* or *taunt* is used, all minds in the area of effect are subject to the spell. The spells do not affect the Chanth as described in the *Player's Handbook*, but instead cause the affected mind or minds to experience Synaptic Static (*CPH*, page 91) for one round (the spell's normal duration is disregarded). A *forget* spell works normally against the Chanth. The spell momentarily shuts down all the creature's psionic abilities as it forgets to initiate or maintain them. However, this spell does not incapacitate the minds.

Magic missile, shatter, Melf's acid arrow, and *dispel magic* spells are completely ineffective against the Chanth's protective sphere. In addition, spells requiring touch, such as *chill touch* or *shocking grasp,* are useless unless the sphere is destroyed. Spells affecting the body, such as *slow, hold person,* or *ray of enfeeblement* are completely ineffective against the bodiless Chanth.

Some spells are less effective because of the protective sphere around the Chanth. The large amount of encephalic fluid in the sphere insulates the Chanth against cold and heat and dissipates electrical energy, so electrical-, cold-, and heat-based spells do half damage. (If the Chanth uses its Energy Containment ability, it may reduce the damage even further.) The spells *Melf's minute meteors, magical stones,* and *spiritual hammer* inflict normal damage against the sphere.

While unable to cast spells itself, the Chanth understands spells and spellcraft. It uses Dominated spell-casters to cast spells for it and destroy as many combatants as possible. Also, it attempts to tie up opposing spell-casters in one-on-one contests with its spell-casting slaves, thus leaving itself free to psionically attack others.

Physical combat: The Chanth makes physical attacks through the three enslaved humans in the chamber and by using its Telekinesis and Animate Object abilities. The Chanth uses its Hands, Voice, and Eyes as both shield and weapon. These slaves do not physically draw weapons and attack until their spells and psionics are exhausted. In physical combat, the slaves fight to the best of their abilities and suffer no penalties for their psionic enslavement to the Chanth. Through Telekinesis and Animate Object, the Chanth sends the 12 chatkchas (THAC0 20, 1d4 + 1 hp damage each) flying and ricocheting about the room, using the Eyes of the Chanth to target the chatkchas. If Kar'fan is blinded, incapacitated, or freed from Chanth control, the Chanth cannot attack with chatkchas until it restores a Sight Link with another minion.

Direct weapon attacks on the Chanth are impossible until the protective *glassteel* sphere has been destroyed. The sphere cannot be shattered, and its surface hardly chips. The sphere has AC 1 and takes 40 hp damage before it suddenly cracks and falls apart like a broken egg shell. The sphere takes normal damage from blunt weapons and half damage from edged weapons. The sphere is immune to all acid-, electrical-, cold-, and heat-based attacks, though these attack forms may affect the Chanth inside.

If the sphere is destroyed, the protective and nourishing encephalic fluids gush forth, leaving the Chanth exposed to the air. The fluids are harmless, and PCs take no damage from contact with the brain juice. The Chanth takes 1 hp of damage per turn from exposure to the air. In addition, without the oxygen and nourishment the fluids provide, the brain cells slowly starve to death. This causes the Chanth an irrevocable loss of 2 hp per day.

Once the sphere is gone, the Chanth is like a snail out of its shell. It has AC 10 and takes normal damage from all weapon attacks. Immobile, it is especially subject to missile fire and takes full damage from acid-, electrical-, cold-, and heat-based attacks. If the creature uses its Flesh Armor ability, its armor class improves (see *CPH,* page 60). However, in the case of the Chanth, a roll of 1 simply means the creature has an AC of 9.

7. Well, Treasury, and Armory.

> You smell the unmistakable sweet smell of water. The air in the room is moist and humid. As you look around, you see several chests stacked against the walls. A well has been dug in the middle of the room.

While this room is the tower's treasury, the most valuable thing in the room is the deep well. When the tower was constructed, the well was dug to supply the laundry and scullery. Now, water is much too precious a commodity to use for such petty things. The Chanth uses access to the well as one more source of control over its slaves.

The Chanth has little use for money or other types of treasure, but the creature hoards these all the same. The Chanth knows loyalty is often much easier to purchase than to earn. The four small chests near the eastern wall hold the entirety of the Chanth's treasure. The first chest holds 900 bits, 120 cp, 18 sp, 5 ep, and 2 gp.

The second chest contains five carved bone bracelets worth 100 cp each, a carved bone scroll tube worth 25 cp, four polished pieces of good quality turquoise worth 20 cp each, and a large but poor-quality piece of onyx worth 50 cp. This chest also contains 90 ornamental ceramic beads, molded and fired like ceramic pieces but worth 2 cp each. The beads are worn as jewelry by stringing them on a strip of leather to form a bracelet or necklace. They can also be sewn directly onto clothing as decoration and are sometimes braided into a person's hair.

The third chest contains three papyrus scrolls, four potion fruits (two lemons and two oranges), and a small jade ring. The scrolls contain the priest spells *bless, cure light wounds,* and *merciful shadows* (*Rules Book,* page 94). The fruits are *fruit of fire resistance, fruit of healing* (× 2), and *fruit of speed.* The jade ring is a *ring of protection +1.*

All the coins, jewelry, gems, and magical items came from raids on caravans and on the douar. Proper ownership of the treasure is questionable, so it is not subject to the Altaruk merchants' finder's fee.

The fourth chest is a lair and a trap. This chest is damp to the touch, and close inspection of the outside reveals discolorations and blemishes resembling water stains. The interior of the chest is a crude nest of damp cloth and rags that holds a ustilagor. If the chest is opened, the creature attacks immediately.

Ustilagor: INT not ratable; AL N(E); AC 5; MV 9; HD 3 + 3; hp 17; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 + 1 (save vs. poison or damage is doubled); SA psionics, alkaline touch; SD psionics, immune to mental attacks; SZ 7 (6″ long); ML 7; XP 650; MM/207 (Intellect Devourer). Psionic Sciences: Energy Containment; Devotions: Chemical Simulation, Contact, Id Insinuation, Telempathic Projection; Attack/Defense Modes: II/M-; Power Score 10; PSPs 150.

This horrible creature was taken from a caravan hauling rare and unusual animals for the arenas of Tyr. It is now a pampered pet of the Chanth. Slaves, using water from the well, are forced to keep the interior of the trunk damp and moist, and sometimes a slave does not return from this duty. The Chanth wishes to protect the ustilagor until it transforms itself into a full-fledged intellect devourer by devouring a psionic creature. The intellect devourer would then be the Chanth's trusted watchdog.

The ustilagor is covered with a slick yellowish-gray fungi that masks its psionic aura. If the PCs search the slimy interior of the chest, they find seven gems worth 15 cp each the creature has hidden away in the ragged folds and furrows of its nest. If captured and returned alive and relatively unharmed to Altaruk, the ustilagor brings a hefty 65-gp finder's fee (reduced by 5 gp per hp damage inflicted on the creature).

A great deal of the arms and armor captured in the caravan raids is also stored here, stacked neatly against the northern wall. PCs may replenish their weapons supply from those stockpiled here. The armor hoard contains five suits of man-sized leather armor, three suits man-sized padded armor, three suits of man-sized hide armor, two suits of mul-sized leather armor, a breastplate of scale mail made of chitinous insectoid material, one leg of metal scale mail, two arms from a suit of bronze plate armor, and four medium leather shields. If the armor is returned to Altaruk, the PCs receive a 1,500-cp finder's fee. If the PCs keep and use the piecemeal armor, consult the *Rules Book,* page 72, for armor class adjustments.

To find the gold-piece value of piecemeal metal armor, consult the "Bonus to AC Per Type of Piece" table on page 72 of the *Rules Book* and the armor cost table on page 69 of the *PH*. The value of a piece of metal armor is its percentage of the complete suit bonus. For example, a complete suit of banded mail reduces armor class by 6; the breastplate alone reduces armor class by 3. Therefore, as the breastplate of banded mail constitutes 50% of the armor-class bonus of a full suit of banded mail, the breastplate of banded mail costs 50% of the full suit price. As another example, one arm of banded mail reduces armor class by 1 and costs one-sixth of an entire suit of banded mail.

Because of the scarcity of metal on Athas, treat a 0 on the armor-class bonus table as a 1 for purposes of computing the cost of the armor. This method should be used for figuring the cost of metal armor only. Piecemeal hide, leather, chitinous insectoid materials, and other types of armor must be computed individually.

The arms cache contains no metal weapons but does contain a number of high-quality weapons of other materials. The stockpile contains 10 short bows, 50 bone-tipped flight arrows (Dmg 1d6 – 1), eight bone clubs, 25 bone daggers, 20 stone daggers (Dmg 1d4 – 1), 20 bone-tipped spears (Dmg 1d6 – 1), and seven bone short swords. If the arms are returned to Altaruk, the PCs receive a 50-cp finder's fee.

Concluding the Adventure

If the Chanth is defeated, the Big Fork islanders are extremely grateful for any help they received from the PCs. They are especially thankful for the return of Flockmaster Wren and any enslaved islanders. The douar rewards each PC with a turquoise armband worth 200 cp. The armbands signify honorary membership in the douar and are recognized as such by the giants living on the island. If PCs are confronted by an angry giant demanding to know what they are doing on the island, they can show the giant the armband to signify their right to be there.

Olandin and Dree (the Voice and Hands of the Chanth) are grateful if rescued and are helpful and honest in all dealings with the PCs. Olandin knows the city of Tyr and will gladly serve as a friendly NPC guide to show the adventurers the wonders, markets, and back-alleys of the city. Dree the Reader can be used in the same way for the city of Gulg. Dree is also on friendly terms with several slave villages in the Mekillot Mountains southeast of Gulg and can introduce PCs to the wild, free lifestyle there. Dree can also decipher old maps, charts, or ancient languages for the PCs.

On the other hand, Kar'fan the defiler (the Eyes of the Chanth) is glad to be rescued but not grateful to the PCs. Kar'fan wants only to get away from the Chanth, the PCs, and the island. Details of his dark and sinister life are left to the DM's devising, and the defiler may be a future enemy of the PCs. The PCs may find themselves in the sticky situation of explaining to a king's unsympathetic templars just why they saved a defiler from the Chanth.

If the PCs successfully complete the adventure by destroying the Chanth and its gith allies, and freeing the creature's slaves, they gain a story award of 250 XP each. In addition, the merchant houses of Altaruk gladly use the PCs again as hirelings. If the adventurers don't defeat the Chanth but are able to escape the island, they can sell their information and maps of the island and tower to the Altaruk merchants for 100 cp. The merchants verify the veracity of such maps and information through psionics. In order to collect a reward of any kind, the PCs must undergo Truthear, ESP, or even Probe if there is some question of their truthfulness.

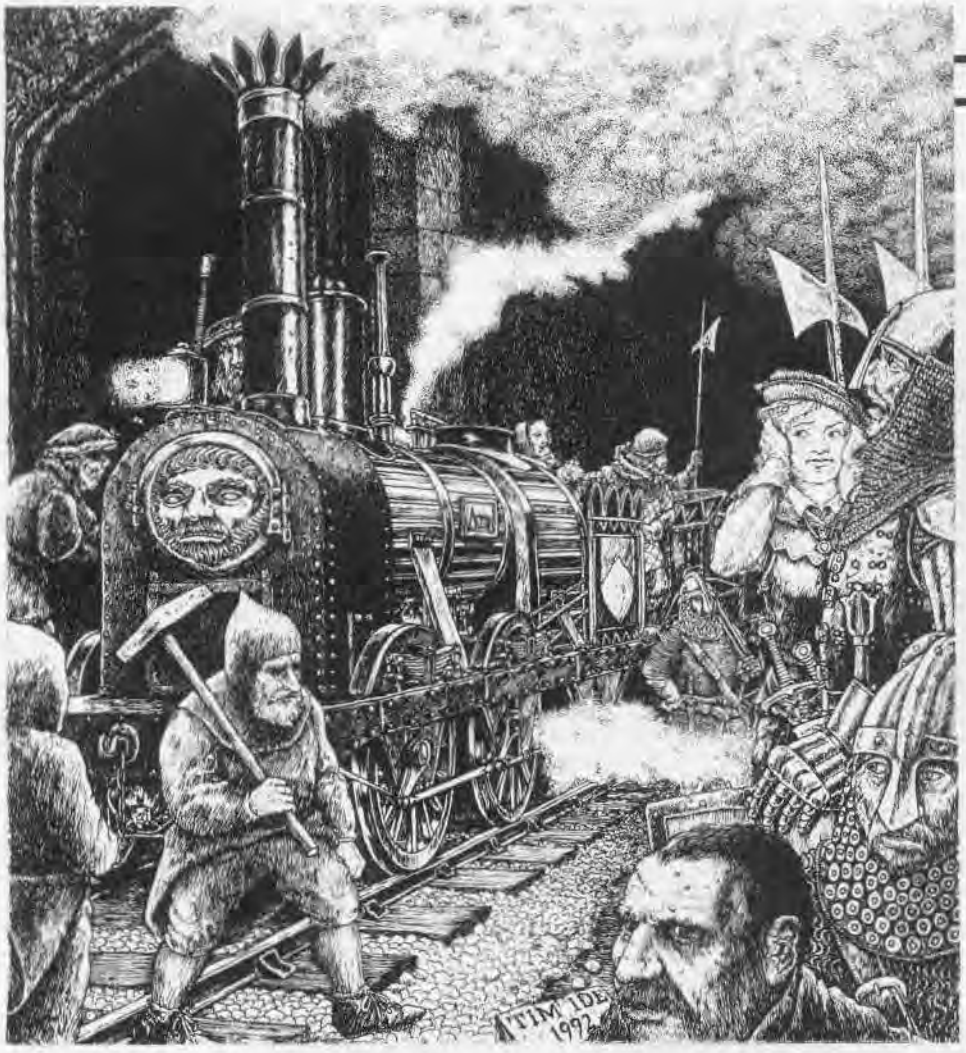
If the PCs attempt to keep all or part of the booty found in area 3, the merchants in Altaruk become aware of it as soon as any of the goods reach a marketplace and offer a bounty for the PCs. If captured alive, the PCs become slaves of the merchant houses and must work off the value of the stolen merchandise. If the PCs keep the arms and armor found in area 7, the merchants may be aware of the appropriation. If they know that the PCs have kept the arms and armor, the merchants flatly refuse to pay the promised reward. They are also unlikely to hire the PCs again except for minor, dangerous, and not particularly lucrative tasks.

If PCs are completely unsuccessful and are enslaved by the Chanth, the DM can resolve the situation in several ways. The following suggestions provide some simple solutions.

—When the PC party fails to return and the raids continue on the trade routes, the merchant houses of Altaruk send a strong party of NPCs to the island. The NPCs either defeat the Chanth, or they rescue the PCs and the two parties together fight the Chanth.

—An enslaved PC is knocked unconscious on a raid on the trade routes. Left for dead, he awakens free of the Chanth's control. The PC then tells the merchants in Altaruk of the danger lurking on the island and a rescue party is mounted.

—Raids on the douar erdlu flocks force Clanmaster Fray to take action. The PCs are rescued by the douar and either join the fight against the Chanth or return to Altaruk. Ω



TRAIN OF EVENTS

BY TIMOTHY IDE

Next Stop: the Bermuda Junction

Artwork by Timothy Ide

Tim Ide is a freelance illustrator working in Adelaide, Australia. He has been hooked on the AD&D® game ever since early high school. He writes: "I have my father to thank for the inspiration for 'Train of Events,' as he raised me on steam engines and is a walking encyclopedia of railway lore."

"Train of Events" is an AD&D adventure intended for 6-8 player characters of levels 6-10 (about 56 total levels). The party should include a wizard and a priest and be of good or neutral alignment. Some strong fighter types will be very useful as well. Tactics are important in this adventure, and the unwary could be in for a nasty surprise.

The adventure is set in a mountain range near the human kingdom of Rondar, but can be modified to suit whatever campaign world the DM desires.

For the DUNGEON MASTER™

Within a few days' travel of the town of Farlock in the kingdom of Rondar, there is a mountain range that is home to a colony of merchant dwarves with the corporate name "Targhazarn Mining Company." This company has many settlements in and around the mountains and maintains good trading relations with Rondar.

TMC (as the company is generally known) is quite an ancient group, having been around this range and others for many centuries. The dwarves mine the seemingly endless riches of Mount Crelezara and have grown very rich off the profits. They are well known as traders, and have established branch offices in many cities and towns.

About a hundred years ago, some inventive TMC dwarves first began exploring the idea of steam power as a means of transport. Their first working steam locomotive had far-reaching effects throughout the local dwarven mining communities. From all over the mountains, dwarves came to marvel at the strange invention that was said to be like a giant kettle on wheels. It revolutionized TMC's mining operation.

Since that time, the railway has expanded throughout the internal complex of Crelezara, running mostly underground but venturing outside briefly, high up in the mountains. Many underground towns have sprung up, and the trains go back and forth carrying ore, supplies, goods, and payrolls.

Steam power has become an essential part of TMC's success and, in true mountain dwarf fashion, it is an invention they do not mean to share with anyone else.

However, the time has come to let outsiders in on the secret. Strange and dark forces are at work deep in the bowels of the mountain, along the furthest reaches of the railway line. Two whole trains of gold coin, provisions, and equipment have been sent to the little underground mining town of Celosdra and have totally vanished somewhere along a 10-mile stretch of line. The first train was a mixed goods and passenger special, but the second was a replacement train loaded with troops as well as goods. Some 10 goods-train guards and an equal number of elite TMC guards, plus two elite officers (a lieutenant and a captain) rode on the second train, ready for any mischief. Both trains are known to have passed the first water stop outside of Carmazoz town but never reached the one after.

TMC's board of directors is completely at a loss, and is having a difficult time trying to explain the situation to bereaved relatives of the missing crews and the angry miners down in Celosdra, who have not been paid for over two months. Troops and investigators have been sent to scour the mysterious line for any clue but have not found anything. Rumors of the wildest sort are flying everywhere, and the unions are on strike, refusing to work in a place where anyone could disappear without warning. Things are rapidly getting out of control, so the directors have decided to call in skilled outside help.

Dark Hijackers

Far off in a remote underground derro stronghold, the savant Regandt was first alerted to the existence of the underground railway by peculiar vibrations in the rock. Later, spying with his *crystal ball,* he discovered the truth behind the vibrations and recognized a magnificent source of plunder and slaves.

Not wanting to share this information with his fellow savants, Regandt set about recruiting some allies for his venture. Residing at the derro stronghold was a lamia noble named Montalaina who was on the run from human lands. She had lost most of her worldly goods and was hungry to replace them, so Regandt quickly enlisted her, realizing that her spell-casting powers would greatly enhance his evil plot.

Regandt needed some skilled, organized craftsmen to pull off the plan he had developed. The Pale Reivers, his own warband of vicious and hardened killers, were much too chaotic to work effectively on such a project. For a while it seemed as if his plan might never become reality, until one day he spied Orgmund's Red-Handed Slayers wandering on the outskirts of derro territory.

Orgmund was a duergar brigand in charge of some 50 gray dwarves eking out a thin existence raiding other Underdark races. His people were the only survivors of an ill-fated rebellion against a duergar king and had never stopped running from the bloody and violent retributions that followed this failed revolt. Regandt realized they were perfect for his purposes and quickly made Orgmund an offer he couldn't refuse. The Pale Reivers and the Red-Handed Slayers joined forces and set off through the unmapped passages of the Underdark toward the TMC railway.

Using Regandt's scrying ability, the duergar tunneled to the exact point required on the railway. The skilled duergar, under derro supervision, then constructed Regandt's trap.

The trap is a siding that diverts trains through a hole in the tunnel wall. The hole is covered by a *wall of stone* that blends with the surrounding stonework so perfectly that even the most skilled dwarven stone masons can detect nothing out of the ordinary. As the train to be abducted approaches the ambush, Montalaina brings down the *wall of stone,* replacing it with an *illusionary wall.* The duergar then quickly run out into the passage and unbolt the rails, winching them across to be bolted onto the secret siding. The doctored rails are then camouflaged with a *phantasmal force* spell by Montalaina, to conceal the anomaly of the track veering off into the wall.

Once the train of bewildered dwarves has charged through the *illusionary wall* onto the siding, a party of duergar rush out to replace the rails and conceal any disturbance. The train is then attacked from all sides by Montalaina and the combined forces of the derro and duergar. As soon as the dwarves have been subdued and the rails repaired, Montalaina replaces the *wall of stone* and the tunnel appears to be normal again.

For the Player Characters

The adventurers start off in the village of Farlock in the kingdom of Rondar or whatever border village the DM desires.

As the PCs walk the streets of Farlock looking for new sensations or a chance of employment, they see dozens of posters stuck up on a tavern wall. The posters all read:

> Urgent work for experienced adventurers/investigators. Please contact Grizard Zalath at the Targhazarn Mining Company office, 13 Traders Way, Dwarven Quarter.

If the heroes follow up on the offer, read the following to the players:

> The TMC office, in the Dwarven Quarter of Farlock, is sandwiched between a tavern and other merchant offices. It is a tall, narrow, half-timbered building of forbidding aspect. Above the door, a shield-shaped sign depicts a golden mountain against a blue sky.
>
> Your knock on the door is answered by an aged dwarven retainer. He asks your names and business and then tells you to wait in the lobby. A short time later he returns and says, "Mr. Zalath will see you now, sirs."
>
> You are led off down the passage to a well appointed office with leaded-glass windows. A richly dressed dwarf of advancing years stands behind the large desk that dominates the room.

The dwarf introduces himself as Grizard Zalath, liaison officer for Targhazarn Mining Company's head office. He is bluff and hearty, not the typical dwarf of the mountain clans. Grizard asks the PC's names and professions, then questions them on what sort of experience they have had in the field. Assuming that the adventurers behave in a reasonably civilized fashion, he offers them drinks from one of his cabinets. Finally, he gets down to business.

> "I require a group of adventurers to journey into the land of Silth, to Mount Crelezara, to investigate the disappearance of several shipments of gold that vanished without a trace while being transported from the town of Carmazoz to the underground mining village of Celosdra. Our own people have been unable to come up with any clues, so we feel

The Pale Reivers

This vile band is led by the derro savant Regandt, an alarming individual whose pallid face is tattooed with blue spirals. His hair is spiked with clay and gathered by a gold circlet. Regandt is an extremely clever and inventive derro who has a great deal of charisma as well; his warriors follow him without question. He knows the value of smooth talking and judicious flattery to get along with such brutal and shallow people as Orgmund and Montalaina.

Regandt also knows that he cannot go on milking the TMC railway forever. Sooner or later the trap will be discovered. He plans to murder Orgmund and his people after the next job. Knowing that Orgmund and his Slayers no longer have any ties with the duergar kingdom, Regandt has no fears of retribution. The Red-Handed Slayers will all suffer acute stomach pains at the next victory celebration, pains that no doubt will prove fatal. The only other person who knows of this plan is Captain Grandel.

Regandt (derro savant): INT genius; AL CE; AC 0; MV 9; HD 8; hp 48; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; D 18; SA spell use; MR 30%; SZ S; ML 16; XP 9,000; MM/96-97; *long sword +3* (used two handed like a bastard sword), scale leather armor (made of brass dragon scales), *ring of protection +2, brooch of shielding,* gold circlet (worth 20 gp). Spells (cast at 12th-level of ability): *affect normal fires, anti-magic shell, blink, cloudkill, ice storm, invisibility* (×2), *levitate, lightning bolt.*

Captain Grandel is Regandt's right hand man and assassin. He is a grim derro, easily distinguished in battle because the right half of his face is tattooed blue. He keeps his dirty blond hair bound with a silver-studded leather strap. Grandel is devoted to Regandt and makes sure that there is no audible dissent amongst the Reivers. Jealous and resentful of Montalaina's and Orgmund's positions of power, Grandel will not lift a finger to aid these two if they are in danger.

Captain Grandel (derro): INT exceptional; AL CE; AC −1; MV 9; HD 7; hp 46; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg by weapon type; D 18; MR 30%; SZ S; ML 15; XP 2,000; MM/96-97; *short sword +2, spiked buckler +2,* scaled leather armor, hair strap worth 10 gp.

Lieutenant Bogrod considers himself very handsome and has a blue stripe tattooed down the center of his face to prove it. He also fancies himself a ladies' man and has been making himself popular with the duergar females and extremely unpopular with the duergar males. Apart from this, he is a competent officer who fears only Regandt and Captain Grandel.

Lieutenant Bogrod (derro): INT high; AL CE; AC 3; MV 9; HD 6; hp 39: THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg by weapon type; D 17; MR 30%; SZ S; ML 15; XP 2,000; MM/96-97; two *daggers +1, studded leather armor +1,* repeating crossbow, three crossbow magazines.

The crossbow fires twice per round to a maximum range of 120'. It has a six-bolt capacity and causes 1-3 hp damage plus 2d6 hp poison damage (no damage if a saving throw vs. poison is made).

Regandt has two student savants, Sezendril and Grafith. Sezendril has two blue crescents tattooed on his cheeks. He lords his superiority over Grafith, who dislikes him intensely for it. Grafith has blue tattooed eyelids and wears a gold ring (worth 4 gp) through his nose.

Sezendril (derro student savant): INT exceptional; AL CE; AC 6; MV 9; HD 6; hp 29; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; SA 25% chance to topple man-sized or smaller opponent with hook fauchard; D 15; MR 30%; SZ S; ML 15; XP 2,000; MM/96-97; hook fauchard, *dagger +1,* studded leather armor, gold medallion (worth 10 gp). Spells: *affect normal fires, minor creation, hypnotic pattern.*

Grafith (derro student savant): INT exceptional; AL CE; AC 6; MV 9; HD 4; hp 21; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA hook fauchard; D 14; MR 30%; SZ S; ML 14; XP 1,400; MM/96-97; hook fauchard, dagger, studded leather armor, *philter of stammering and stuttering* (Grafith plans to someday place this potion in Sezendril's food). Spells: *invisibility, charm person.*

Derro sergeants (5): INT very; AL CE; AC 2; MV 9; HD 5; hp 25 each; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg by weapon type; D 17; MR 30%; SZ S; ML 15; XP 975; MM/96-97; scaled leather armor, spiked buckler (1-4 hp damage), spear, footman's pick, 15 pp, 5 gp.

Derro corporals (10) INT very; AL CE; AC 3; MV 6; HD 4; hp 20 (×5), 18 (×5); THAC0 17; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg by weapon type; D 16; ML 14; XP 650. Five corporals are armed with spears and footman's picks; the other five have aklyses and daggers. All wear scaled leather armor and have spiked bucklers, 12 pp, and 5 gp.

Main derro warband (30): AC 6; MV 9; HD 3; hp 15 (× 10), 14 (×10), 13 (×10); THAC0 17; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg by weapon type; D 15; ML 14; XP 420. Eight are armed with hook fauchards; the remainder carry repeating crossbows. All wear studded leather armor and carry daggers, 5 pp, and 3 gp.

All other details of the corporals and the main warband are the same as for the derro sergeants. For further information on hook fauchards, spiked bucklers, aklyses, and repeating crossbows, see the *Monstrous Manual,* pages 96-97.

Montalaina

Montalaina the lamia noble is in this venture purely for the money. Derro, duergar, and dwarven steam railways are all very much beneath her dignity. She takes her orders from Regandt, but in such a patronizing manner as to make him wild with anger. She is a prima donna, her temper fluctuating from seductive and charming (when she wants something) to vile fits of insane rage (when she doesn't get what she wants). Regandt is very circumspect in his dealings with her.

Montalaina often uses her *polymorph self* spell to pose as a human or dwarven female when she wants to find things out. She almost always wears red clothes, hence the myth of the "Red Lady" (see page 67).

A few years ago, Montalaina entered Rondar's high society with the intention of devouring any eligible young men she could catch (a sort of lamia noble debutante, if you will). One specific nobleman caught her eye and, being young and foolish, she became infatuated with him and ignored the rumblings in her stomach. She ensnared his affections with her good looks and vivacious charm, and soon they married.

Montalaina became a great success in human society and did everything

she could to be worthy of her husband. She even bore her lord a son, but her happy dream could not last. One day her husband saw her in her true form. Unable to stand his revulsion, Montalaina flew into a violent rage. After all the years of giving up raw human flesh and eating boring roast beef for him, was this the way he treated her? The affront was too much to ask of any monster. Montalaina pushed her husband out of their high bedroom window, and he fell to his death.

A lone nursemaid overheard the emotional scene within the bedchamber. The nobleman's falling scream galvanized her into action and she fled, clutching Montalaina's infant son to her bosom. Ordinarily, Montalaina would have torn the castle apart looking for the child, but her lamia powers had waned due to her unusual diet and lifestyle, and her spell powers had waned as well. As it was, she barely managed to elude her husband's retainers who, alerted by the nursemaid, came with their spears to kill the slithering monster their mistress had become. She left behind her son and all her worldly goods in her flight.

Montalaina's goal is to garner as much capital as she can, so that she can set herself up once more in human society (under a new identity) and reclaim her son by fair means or foul. Montalaina has been soured by her experiences as a human and is now true to both her lamia noble nature and her alignment.

Montalaina (lamia noble): INT high; AL CE; AC 3; MV 9; HD 10+1; hp 65; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg by spell type only (unarmed); SA spells, Wisdom drain; MR 30%; SZ M; ML 14; XP 4,000; MM/217; two gemstone earrings worth 10 gp each; *necklace of missiles* (one 7-HD, two 5-HD, and four 3-HD fireballs). Montalaina saves this last item for life-threatening situations.

Memorized spells (as ninth-level caster): *magic missile, phantasmal force*, shield*, sleep; invisibility, strength, web; fireball, lightning bolt, hold person; ice storm, minor globe of invulnerability*; wall of stone.*

Inherent spells: *charm person, mirror image, suggestion, illusion**. Spells indicated by an asterisk (*) have already been cast.

The Red-Handed Slayers

Orgmund, the leader of the Slayers, is a brutal-looking duergar with a long forked beard and a ring through his left nostril. He wears black plate mail with an open-faced helm. His shield is black with the device of a red fist clutching a dagger painted on it, and most of his followers' shields bear the same blazon.

Orgmund is highly intelligent, but he is no match for Regandt's diabolical machinations. He is a tradition-bound soldier who runs his troop on very strict military lines. He doesn't like derro much and finds their lack of martial discipline appalling, but he has had to admit that the partnership has been very profitable. He suspects that he and his troop may have done more than their fair share of work, but Regandt has always managed to persuade him otherwise. He has no inkling of the derro plot against the Slayers, but he is on his guard at all times.

Orgmund's warriors respect and admire him, both for his courage and his leadership. He has seen them through difficult times since their escape from the disastrous rebellion against the duergar king, and it is mainly through his expertise that the Slayers have survived so long. Furthermore, Orgmund's methods of dealing with anyone who would challenge his leadership are savagely final.

Orgmund Red-Hand (duergar): INT exceptional; AL LE (N); AC 0; MV 6; F7; hp 59; THAC0 13; #AT 2/1 (short sword specialist); Dmg by weapon type; SA *invisibility, enlargement*; SD save with +4 bonus; S 18/50; SZ S; ML 17; XP 3,000; MM/96-97; *plate mail +1, shield +1, short sword +2,* dagger, gold nose ring (worth 2 gp).

Captain Ord (Orgmund's right-hand man) is gaunt, even for a duergar. He emphasizes his deathlike countenance by keeping his head shaved completely bald and by wearing a black hooded cloak. Before going into battle, Ord likes to blacken his eyelids and the hollows of his face with kohl. The effect is quite ghastly, and PCs have a 25% chance to mistake him for some kind of undead.

Orgmund uses Ord to spy on the derro from time to time, just to see if they are up to anything. So far, nothing has been revealed. Regandt is far too clever to let himself be caught by the likes of Captain Ord.

Captain Ord (duergar): INT high; AL NE; AC 4; MV 6; F6/T6; hp 33; THAC0 15; #AT 3/1 and 2/1 (short sword specialist using two-weapon style); Dmg by weapon type +2 (short sword specialization); SA *invisibility, enlargement*, backstab (×3); SD save with +4 bonus; PP 45%, OL 50%, FT 45%, MS 45%, HS 35%, DN 35%, CW 70%, RL 5%; D 16; SZ S; ML 15; XP 9,000; MM/96-97; *leather armor +2, short sword +1,* dagger (both envenomed with type O poison), four throwing knives.

Ord fights with both sword and dagger in the two-weapon style (see the *Complete Fighter's Handbook,* page 64).

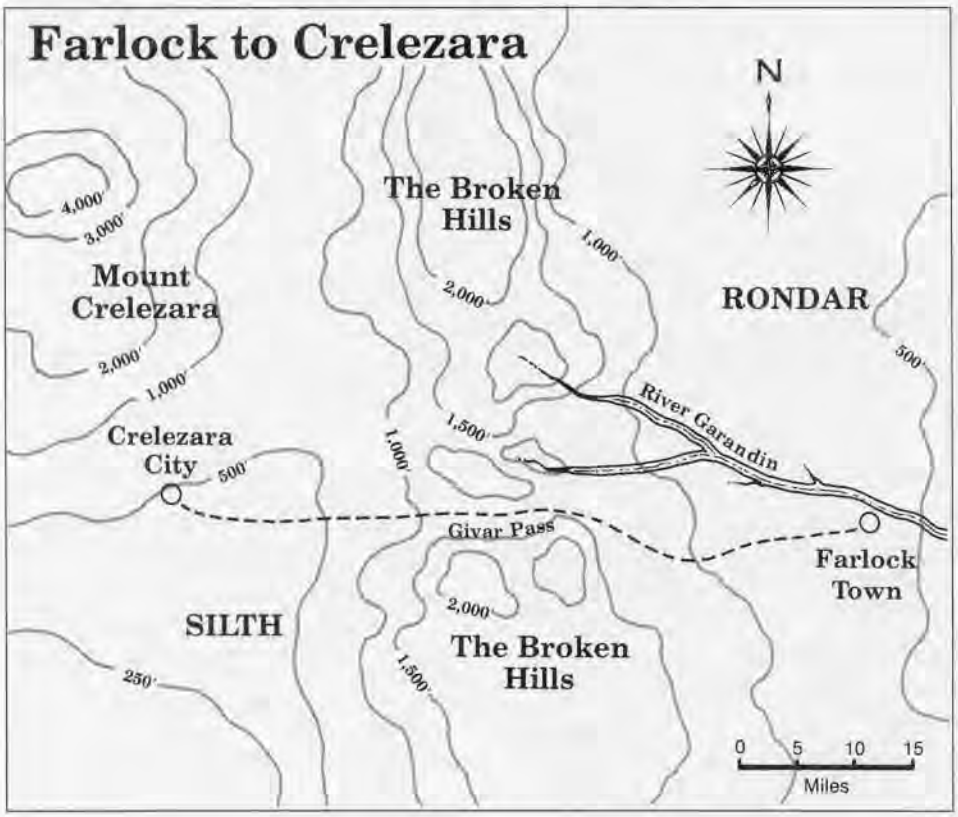
Duergar lieutenants (2): INT very; AL LE (N); AC 2; MV 6; HD 3+6; hp 24, 23; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA/SD as Orgmund; SZ S; ML 15; XP 975; MM/96-97; plate mail, shield, short sword (×1), war hammer (×1), 27 gp.

Duergar sergeants (3): INT average; AL LE (N); AC 4; MV 6; HD 2+4; hp 19, 18, 17; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA/SD as Orgmund; SZ S; ML 14; XP 650; chain mail, shield, military pick, light crossbow, 26 gp.

Duergar warriors (14): INT average; AC 4; HD 1+2; hp 8 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA/SD as Orgmund; ML 13; XP 420; chain mail, shield, spear, war hammer (×7), military pick (×7), 20 gp.

The warriors attack with their spears first, keeping their hammers and picks in reserve. Spears are useful for attacking opponents hiding under railway trucks or for jabbing through arrow slits in the carriages.

The Slayers are very experienced and will use their magical abilities to their full advantage.



that outside help might be able to turn something up. I may not go into the details, but we suspect some magical agency is at work deep within our mines, and we have very little experience in such matters."

Zalath offers a reward of 1,000 gp per adventurer, plus all expenses paid if the party will take the job. Half the money will be paid on arrival and half on completion of the job. Zalath cannot be bargained higher than 1,200 gp per person ("The recession, you know"). Veligarn Karthar, Zalath's aide, will accompany the party to Mount Crelezara with a letter of introduction to deliver to Vorgen Slurdaz, the company's managing director.

Once the PCs have gathered all their equipment, a servant takes them to meet Karthar outside the TMC office. Karthar is mounted on a pony and has 150 gp of company money in his saddlebags to pay expenses along the way.

Veligarn Karthar does a lot of Zalath's running around in Farlock. He meets clients and acts as a messenger from time to time. He is young and ambitious and plans to rise quite high in TMC's executive hierarchy. Veligarn is neat and tidy, and his equipment is meticulously cared for. He keeps his beard trimmed short, possibly because of his long association with humans.

Veligarn Karthar (dwarf): AL LG; AC 4; MV 6; F3; hp 18; THAC0 18; #AT 3/2 (short sword specialist); Dmg by weapon type; S 16, D 15, C 16, I 14, W 15, Ch 12: ML 13; chain mail, short sword, light crossbow, 24 light quarrels.

Pony: INT animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 1+1; hp 7; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2; SZ L; ML 7; MM/194-195.

Zalath arrives to see the party off. He is unarmed, except for a dagger, but keeps a suit of dwarven plate mail, a metal buckler and a *battle axe +1* upstairs in the attic.

Grizard Zalath (dwarf): AL LG; AC 10; MV 6; F5; hp 32; THAC0 16; #AT 3/2 (axe specialist); Dmg by weapon type; S 17, D 12, C 11, I 15, W 13, Ch 14; ML 14; dagger.

The Land of Silth

The region known as the Broken Hills is a massive, cracked crust of naked limestone. Its scarred and pitted surface was gouged by glaciers thousands of years ago.

The party will have to cross the Broken Hills by way of the Givar Pass before reaching the mountainous lands of Silth. Givar Pass is a well-trodden path between Rondar and Silth, and the road is reasonably well maintained.

For every 12 hours the party spends traveling through this area, roll for an encounter. Encounters occur on a roll of 5 or 6 on 1d6. If an encounter occurs, roll another 1d6 and consult the sidebar on page 59.

The countryside rises steeply as you ride into Silth. The vegetation is sparse and uninteresting, but the mountains are another matter. Huge and mighty, Mount Crelezara soars 4,000' or more into the sky. The land here is stark and impressive.

Small settlements of dwarves are dotted here and there near the streams and rivers that flow down from the mountain's ice-capped heights. Crofters and goatherders scrape a living out of the harsh countryside. They are a tough and stern people, and they eye you suspiciously as you ride past.

The city of Crelezara itself is nestled right at the southern foot of the mountain. It is an untidily laid-out place with streets that go off in random directions. All the buildings are scaled to dwarven size, and the streets are so narrow that horses can travel in single file only, and riders must duck inn signs and washing lines.

If the PCs arrive in Crelezara at the end of the day, Karthar conducts them to an inn in the human quarter. This fairly clean establishment is called "The Long Man." It caters to human merchants and travelers and is run by a Rondarian man called Tarnlin Garlen.

The following morning (or the same day, depending on how quickly the party traveled), Karthar takes the PCs to meet Vorgen Slurdaz.

Inside the Mountain

The entrance to the mining complex is an impressive edifice carved out of the rock of the mountain. It is shaped like a huge dwarven face, its gaping mouth serving as the grand entrance. A long flight of stone steps winds up the hill from the city to the

Broken Hills Encounters

1. **Wild boar:** INT animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 15; HD 3+3; hp 22; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 3-12; SZ S; ML 10; XP 175; MM/241 (Mammal).

Sows (3): INT animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 15; HD 3; hp 18, 15, 12; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SZ S; ML 9; XP 120; MM/241.

Young (8); INT animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 15; HD 1; hp 6 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SZ S; ML 8; XP 15; MM/241.

These feral pigs have not had much luck looking for food in these parts and are rather scrawny. Hungry and naturally aggressive, they view the party as both a threat and a potential lunch.

2. **Hill giants** (3): INT low, AL CE; AC 3; MV 12; HD 12+(1-2); hp 60, 55, 50; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (2d6+7 with club); SA hurl rocks for 2-16 hp; SZ H; ML 14; XP 3,000; MM/141; clubs.

This aggressive trio is on the hunt for wealthy-looking victims. They attack with boulders, from the rocky outcrops that run alongside the road. When the party appears to be weakened, the giants leap down to the road to finish the PCs off with clubs.

The three giants carry sacks of loot containing 1,000 gp, 1,200 gp and 2,200 gp, respectively.

3. **Dwarven merchant caravan:** This caravan is led by Godrich Grelsom, a dour and proud dwarf who is cooly polite. He has heard only vague rumors of the TMC robberies, but he does not pass any information on to nondwarves.

Godrich Grelsom: AL LG; AC 2; MV 6; F8; hp 62; THAC0 13; #AT 2/1 (battle axe specialist); Dmg by weapon type; SD +4 bonus to saves vs. magic and poison; S 18/25, D 12, C 15, I 12, W 13, Ch 11; ML 14; plate mail, small shield, hand axe (×2), *battle axe +2.*

Grelsom's second in command is Rizel Granmog, a silent dwarf who knows the value of not speaking out of turn in front of Grelsom.

Rizel Granmog: AL LG; AC 0; MV 6; F5; hp 35; THAC0 16; #AT 3/2 (axe specialist); Dmg by weapon type; SD +4 bonus to saves vs. poison and magic; S 18/56, D 16, C 14, I 11, W 12, Ch 10; ML 14; plate mail, small shield, *battle axe +1.*

Dwarven merchants (40): AL LG, AC 4; MV 6, HD 1+1; hp 7 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SD +3 bonus to saves vs. poison and magic; SZ M; ML 14.

These dwarves are traveling with six covered wagons, each drawn by six draft horses. Fourteen dwarves armed with crossbows and battle axes ride in the wagons. The remaining 26 walk alongside the wagons and are armed with halberds and short swords.

The wagons contain goods worth 70,500 gp, distributed equally among them. The goods include gold plates, goblets, bowls, quantities of gems and intricate jewelry, and finely crafted weapons intended for human use. The weapons include long swords, daggers, halberds and heavy crossbows. With the exception of the weapons, all goods are stored in heavy oak chests bound with iron. Only Grelsom has the keys to all the padlocks. The weapons are wrapped in oiled leathers and tied securely.

4. **Galeb duhr** (2): INT very; AL N; AC −2; MV 6; HD 9; hp 61; 54; THAC0 11; #AT 2; Dmg 3-18; SA spell use; SD immune to lightning and normal fire but take full damage from magical fire (+4 bonus to save); MR 20%; SZ L; ML 17; XP 9,000; MM/122.

These rock creatures can cast the following spells as 20th-level mages once per day: *move earth, stone shape, passwall, transmute rock to mud,* and *wall of stone.* They can cast *stone shape* at will.

This pair are passing through the area, searching for deserted countryside. The only clue that they are present is the strange sound of their song thrumming softly out of the rocks ahead of the party. The song stops when the PCs draw near. Unless the party insists on looking for the source of the song, this encounter passes without further event.

The first galeb duhr possesses three gems worth 100 gp each, plus two chalky-tasting potions of *healing* in a single stone jar. The second galeb duhr has one gem worth 500 gp and potions of *fire resistance* and *ventriloquism.*

5. **Rondarian patrol** (22): This group is patrolling the Givar Pass, making sure that it is free of hostiles and disturbances. They ask each traveler a set of purely routine questions about his business and destination. Unless the heavily armed PCs give answers that lead the patrol to suspect they are bandits, the soldiers quickly pass on.

Captain: AL LG; AC 2; MV 6; F6; hp 43; THAC0 15; #AT 3/2 (lance specialist); Dmg by weapon type; S 18/21, D 12, C 14, I 12, W 13, Ch 14; ML 12; plate mail, small shield, medium horse lance, long sword, dagger.

Lieutenant: AL LN; AC 2, MV 6; F3; hp 20; THAC0 18; #AT 1 (light crossbow specialist); Dmg by weapon type; S 17, D 15, C 12, I 10, W 11, Ch 13; ML 12; plate mail, light crossbow, long sword, small shield, dagger.

Lancers (10): AL LN; AC 4; MV 9; F2; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 12; chain mail, small shield, medium lance, long sword.

Crossbowmen (10); AL LN; AC 5; MV 9; F2; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 12; chain mail, light crossbow, long sword.

All members of the patrol are mounted on medium warhorses. The two officers' horses have chain barding, and the troopers' horses have brigandine barding.

Medium warhorse (22): INT animal; AL N; AC 5 (brigandine) or 4 (chain barding); MV 18; HD 3+3; hp 17 each; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/1-3; SZ L; ML 7; MM/194-195 (Horse).

6. **Wolves** (15): INT low; AL N; AC 7; MV 18; HD 3; hp 17 (pack leader), 15 (×4), 14 (×5), 12 (×5); THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-5; SA +1 vs. *charm;* SZ S; ML 10; XP 120; MM/362.

This pack stalks the party and attacks when the PCs are off guard, such as when they are setting up or breaking down camp, or in the middle of the night. The wolves' howling has a 50% chance to panic any horses the PCs have with them.

entrance. A little way around the mountain, another road leads to the trade entrance.

As you walk up the steps to the grand entrance, you see many wagons going back and forth along this road. Those of you with keen eyesight can see the dwarves carting large quantities of coal into the complex.

The great bronze doors of the grand entrance are kept open during the day and are closed at night. The guards know Karthar and, after a brief word or two, they let the party through. If Karthar is not with the party (he may have been killed on the trip through the mountains), the guards do not let the party through unless one of the adventurers shows them the letter of introduction from Veligarn Karthar.

The main ruling body of Crelezara is the Targhazarn Mining Company. Other organizations are also represented here, such as the city's main guilds and the Rondarian Embassy. The underground portion of the city is a complicated place with many levels, but the party will see only a small part of it.

The underground nerve center of Crelezara City is an impressive network of passages, halls, and offices, all filled with soberly dressed dwarves hurrying about their business. Karthar leads you through a bewildering array of corridors and antechambers until finally you come to an impressive lobby with a high ceiling. Here you meet a secretary, who conducts you into the office of Vorgen Slurdaz.

The office is huge, fully 50′ square, with a high vaulted ceiling from which hangs a large wrought-iron chandelier. The walls are hung with bucklers, shields, and broad swords, giving the room a grim, martial flavor.

Slurdaz is a surly looking dwarf in black garb, sitting slumped in a high-backed oak chair. He sits behind a large mahogany desk covered with ledgers, papers, and writing paraphernalia. In silence, he reads your letter of introduction before tossing it onto his desk. He gazes up at you with pouchy, red-rimmed eyes that look like he hasn't slept properly in days.

Slurdaz is completely exasperated by TMC's problems. The mystery of the train robberies is keeping him awake at night, and when he does finally manage to sleep, he has nightmares about disappearing into an endless black tunnel filled only with an awful silence. He is getting little practical help from his colleagues, and he is growing increasingly unpopular with the general populace, who are demanding action.

Vorgen Slurdaz (dwarf): AL LG; AC 10; MV 6; F7; hp 49; THAC0 14; #AT 2 (broad sword specialist); Dmg by weapon type; S 16, D 13, C 14, I 14, W 16, Ch 14, ML 14; dagger, broad sword.

Slurdaz introduces himself to the party, and Karthar presents the PCs to him. After the introductions are out of the way, Slurdaz gets down to business.

"Our peculiar case is this," Slurdaz says. "Our mining operation runs deep into the mountain for many miles. From here at Crelezara City, our operation goes to the town of Carmazoz, located at the Valley of the White Peaks, and then on to the village of Celosdra. This whole area is rich in gold and other ores, and our industry is making TMC a force to be reckoned with in many nearby kingdoms.

"However, some unknown power has completely abducted our shipments of provisions and payment to the miners of Celosdra. Twice this has happened, two whole freight trains, crews, and guards, completely vanished without a trace.

"Apart from these outrages, our problems are multiplying. The miners in Celosdra are on strike, thinking that we are trying to cheat them. So are the freight crews, who are convinced that they are going to be the next victims to disappear. They're frightened, and who can blame them? The victims' relatives are demanding a full-scale investigation and compensation, and our whole organization is beginning to come apart at the seams. Jobs are at stake here, as well as our financial return—our whole way of life—not to mention the lives of our poor kidnapped workers, whatever's become of them."

Alert players may have noticed the reference to freight trains and demand an explanation. As Vorgen Slurdaz, the DM may treat this as the adventurers' puzzlement at an unfamiliar term and ignore any player interruptions.

"All this is best explained if you follow me," says Slurdaz, rising to his feet. Picking up his walking staff, he ushers you from the room and out into one of the main thoroughfares of the complex.

After walking for about five minutes, down flights of stairs and through dimly lit halls, you finally come to a gate. Slurdaz unlocks it and gestures for you to walk through.

The Steam Locomotive

Beyond the gate, the party enters the railway station of Crelezara City. The station is a large underground tunnel with a ceiling approximately 50′ high. Stone pillars dot the platform at regular intervals. The ceiling is black with the soot of centuries' worth of steam engines puffing through. Lining the platform are seats, benches, and offices for making trip bookings. A refreshment stand has been built into the wall here, along with a general store.

The station is lit by oil lanterns hanging from the pillars, bathing the whole area in pools of yellow light. The place is almost deserted at the moment.

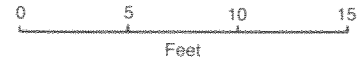
Sitting on the tracks by the platform is one of TMC's steam locomotives, with a train of 10 trucks and two carriages behind it. Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

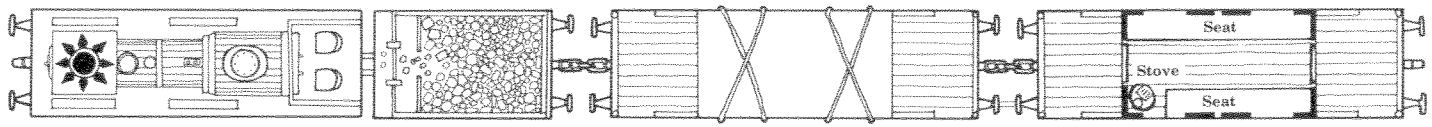
Before you is one of the strangest machines you have ever seen. Built of metal, it appears to be a gigantic cylinder of steel mounted on wheels. Its front end is fitted with a tall metal funnel, while its rear is enclosed by a walled platform. Two dwarves stand aboard this platform; they are obviously the machine's operators.

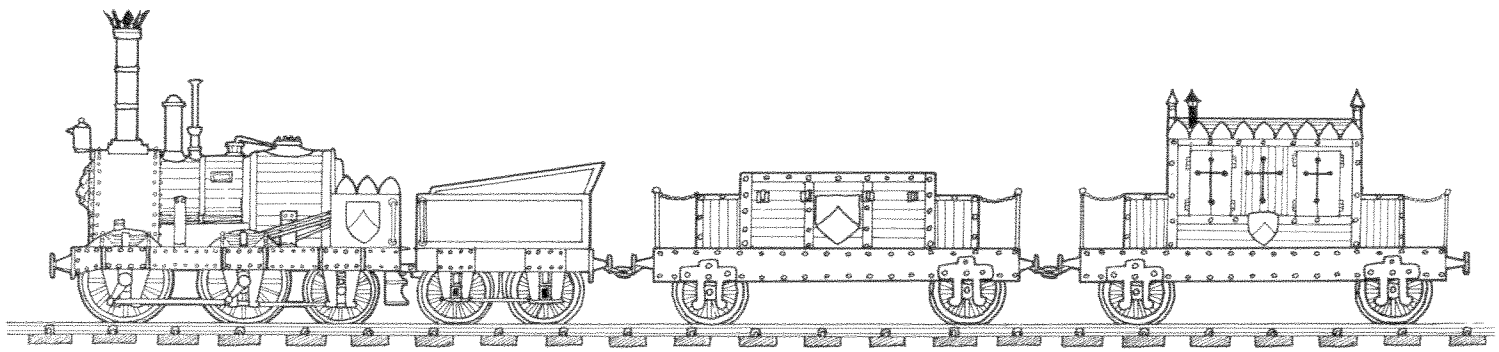
The whole contraption hisses loudly, like a great beast, making you all flinch involuntarily. The noise does not seem to bother a group of about 20 dwarven soldiers who are fastening tarpaulins over a series of large wagons coupled to the back of the metal monster.

The DM should encourage PC reactions to the steam engines and the whole nature of railway travel. Gnomes and dwarves are likely to be fascinated, as are mages, but druids and barbarians may be extremely distrustful of something so far removed from nature.

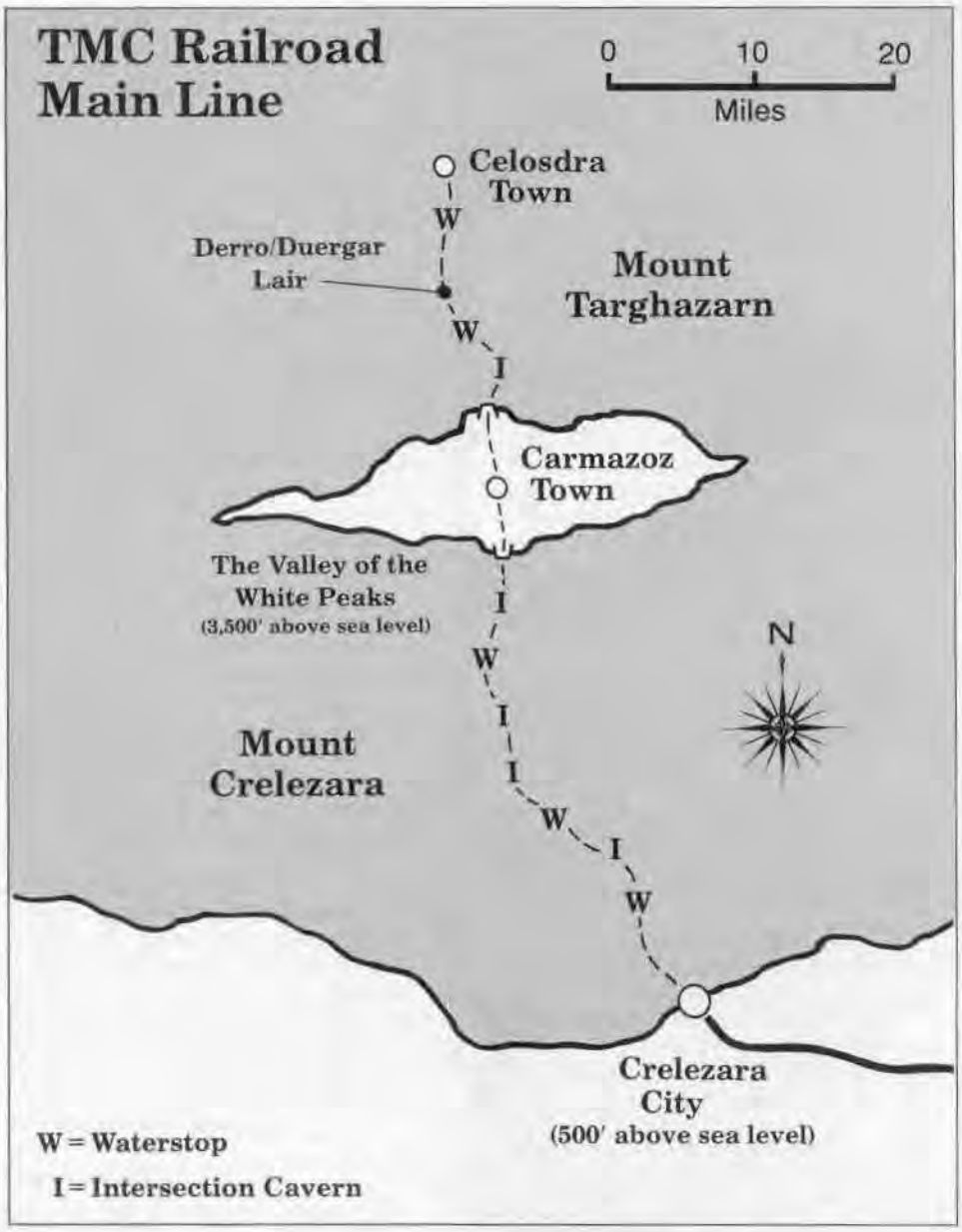
Targhazarn Mining Company
Locomotive and Rolling Stock







Locomotive **Tender** **Truck** **Carriage**



The locomotives in this adventure are based on English and European railway engines of the early 1800s, complete with all the problems experienced. The standard TMC locomotive is a tender engine running on coal. Its top speed of 15 MPH is phenomenal by medieval standards, considering that the fastest galley does only 9 MPH under full oar. However, for most day-to-day work, the locomotives' average speed is 10 MPH.

All of the steam engines have names and some have faces carved in relief on their smokebox doors. The dwarves feel the same way about their engines that other races feel about ships.

In total, the dwarves have 20 locomotives on their system, minus the two that have disappeared. There are usually 10 engines spread between the depots of Crelezara, Carmazoz, and Celosdra. The rest are distributed around the branch lines.

Rolling Stock

The term "rolling stock" refers to trucks, carriages, and any other wheeled railway vehicle without its own power.

Each truck is four wheeled and has a footplate at either end to accommodate a guardsman or crewman, if required. Every truck is numbered and has the TMC arms emblazoned on each side.

Carriages are made of wood reinforced with iron. They are four wheeled and have a footplate at either end. Along each side of the carriage, windows are fitted with canvas blinds and a wooden shutters pierced by a cross-shaped arrow slit. Reinforced wooden doors seal either end of the carriage.

The carriage that the party will travel in has been refitted to accommodate a human-sized group. This coach can seat eight people comfortably. If the PCs wish, they can seat themselves anywhere on the train, from the truck footplates to the engine cab itself.

> Slurdaz proceeds to give you a rundown on the machine he calls a "steam engine." Much of what he says is incomprehensible, as he launches into a complicated explanation that only a sage would understand. You wait for him to finish and get on with the important aspects of your mission.
>
> "As you are no doubt aware," he continues, "the people of Celosdra have been without vital supplies and pay for two whole months now. As far as they are concerned, it is vital that this train of supplies gets through. I am banking on whatever force it is to strike again at this train as it did to both previous trains to Celosdra. I want you to protect this train and discover what this invisible enemy is. How you go about this is up to you. You know your business much better than I."

By this time, the soldiers (under their commander, Sergeant Ragin) have formed up on the platform along with the train crew. Slurdaz introduces the PCs and explains that the party is in charge of all operations.

Dwarven soldiers (20): AL LG; AC 4; MV 6; F2; hp 10 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SD +3 bonus to saves vs. poison and spells; SZ M; ML 14; chain mail, buckler, short sword, heavy crossbow.

These are the elite of TMC's forces. They do not usually serve on the goods trains, but these are desperate times.

Sergeant Ragin (dwarf): AL LG; AC 4; MV 6; F3; hp 20; THAC0 18; #AT 3/2

(short sword specialist); Dmg by weapon type; SD +4 bonus to saves vs. poison and magic; S 17, D 15, C 15, I 12, W 13, Ch 13; ML 14; chain mail, buckler, short sword, heavy crossbow.

Ragin is a sturdy, unimaginative dwarf with a typical sergeant's manner.

Vosh and **Zurkel** (dwarven engineer and fireman): AL LG; AC 5; MV 6; F1; hp 7, 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SD +3 bonus to saves vs. poison and magic; SZ M; ML 13; chain mail, hand axe, dagger.

Vosh and Zurkel know all there is to know about steam engines and their workings. They are reasonably friendly, as mountain dwarves go, but they are quite nervous about the trip.

Innart (dwarven guard): Innart's statistics are the same as those for Vosh and Zurkel above, except that Innart has 8 hp and is armed with a battle axe.

Innart rides in the second carriage, which serves as a brake-van. He helps run the train and is in charge of all the paperwork. He is also in charge of braking the rear end of the train to minimize derailments in case of runaway rolling stock. Innart is a fairly self-important fellow, and he resents having to take orders from "outsiders." He will do so, but with bad grace. If flattered, he will be more tractable.

The train is carrying 12,000 gp in gold coin and assorted goods, such as food and clothing. This need not concern the party much, as they are merely supposed to guard it. The PCs may wish to have their carriage placed anywhere along the train, rather than near the rear as the train is presently set up. Innart will grudgingly allow this, but he and the brake-van must be at the very rear of the train at all times.

Eventually, the train will be ready to leave. Innart makes sure everyone is aboard and then, with a wave of his green flag, signals Vosh to move off.

> With a great hissing sound and a steady chugging noise, the steam engine *Warrior* moves slowly forward. Huge clouds of white smoke belch forth from the engine's funnel, while puffs of steam spray from around the wheels. Vorgen Slurdaz raises his hand in solemn farewell as your train leaves the station and enters the murky tunnels of Crelezara.

The Tunnels of Crelezara

The main line of the railway is subterranean, running through tunnels 30′ wide, arched to a height of 25′. Two sets of tracks run parallel all the way to Celosdra, spaced about 6′ apart to avoid the dangerous suction effect that two trains create if they pass too close to each other.

Northbound trains run on the eastern track, while southbound trains travel along the western side. On the main line (Crelezara to Celosdra), trains run every two hours in both directions, 24 hours a day. The first trains leave at midnight. Trains run on the branch lines only once or twice per day on average, and the time of their departure varies.

Water Stops

Every 10 miles, locomotives must stop to take on water. Along the railway line, water stops are placed at 10-mile intervals. Each stop is has a water tank and a standpipe; there is a coal stage at every third stop. At least one dwarf is stationed at any standpipe, but there are rarely more than four dwarves. It takes 15 minutes for a train crew to refill the tanks and inspect the train.

Intersection Caverns

From these large, pillared caverns, branch lines go off to other parts of the mountain. The caverns are wide enough to accommodate the large radial curves of the track as it veers away. Point crews of 3-6 dwarves are stationed in each intersection cavern at all times. The cavern crew is responsible for making sure that the trains go in the right direction and don't collide with each other. Accidents happen only rarely.

There is a 30% chance that, while approaching one of these caverns, the PCs' train will be delayed for 10-15 minutes while another train passes through. To signal the wait, a dwarf with a blue lantern walks down the line to meet the PCs' train. As soon as the line is free, the signalman changes the colored slide in his lantern to yellow, and the train is free to move on. On the TMC railway, line blue means stop or danger (as in a blue flame in a mine full of explosive gas) and yellow means go or all clear (as in a normal flame).

With the exception of the water stops and the intersections, the tunnels are not lit. The only light comes from lanterns on the engine and in the carriages. If the optional infravision rules are used, the dwarves' infravision allows them to see only live creatures in the dark, not obstructions on the rails. If standard infravision is used, obstructions are usually spotted too late too stop a train.

Breakdowns and Track Repairs

In the course of the adventure, the PCs' train may break down or the track may need to be repaired. Minimal damage can be repaired under normal circumstances by the crew themselves, but more severe damage may require the assistance of a track repair crew (see page 64). In some cases, a new locomotive is required.

Replacement trains and repair crews are called up in the following way. In the event of a breakdown, a group of five soldiers or crew walk back the way that the train has come with a blue "stop" lantern. Approximately 600 yards from the rear of the train, one dwarf stops with the lantern and the rest proceed to the next water stop. The most important water stop is the one that the train has just passed through, as this water stop is responsible for preventing rear end collisions. The unlucky dwarf whose job it is to remain with the lantern carries a whistle or a horn to alert his comrades of any hostile intervention. This is a perfect opportunity to spring a wandering monster attack, while the train sits stranded and alone in the dark railway tunnel.

At the water stop, the message of the train breakdown is passed on to trains running in the opposite direction, which then pass it on to all railway dwarves. Accident forms and other such paperwork ensure that all railway personnel know about the breakdown and its location.

Once knowledge of the breakdown has been established, a replacement locomotive or repair crew can be despatched to the scene. Locomotives come from the nearest depot (Crelezara, Carmazoz, or Celosdra); repair crews are never more than 1-6 hours away. As far as replacement engines are concerned, the DM must work out the time it takes for a passing train to relay a message from the previous water stop, allowing an hours' organization at the depot end while the new engine is steamed up, shunted out and so forth. DMs that do not wish to go to all this trouble can assume a flat five-hour delay before a replacement engine turns up.

When a breakdown occurs, the train's 10-mile section of line is closed, and trains running in both directions are sent through one at a time on the other line, until the track is repaired or cleared. In the case of the rust monster encounter (see sidebar, page 65), if the PCs' train is undamaged but the track ahead of them is destroyed, the train can run in reverse to the previous water stop, then travel forward again on the opposite track.

Like real railways, train movement can become extremely complicated. The DM is strongly advised to read all this information thoroughly and to keep a timetable of the party's movements by train to make play easier. To simplify play, the DM may work out all the "random" aspects of the PCs' train journey in advance. Even so, the DM should roll dice at the appropriate moment to make the players think the encounters are actually random. This way, the players do not feel that they are being railroaded through the adventure (if that pun may be forgiven).

Track Repair Crews

TMC track repair crews consist of 5-8 dwarves who travel about the railway, repairing minor damage and generally maintaining order. Each crew rides about on a light railcart. The railcarts can be lifted on and off the tracks (by no fewer than four dwarves) and are operated by pumping a central control lever.

The track repair crew dwarves are typically tough, dirty, foul mouthed, and competent. They are always equipped with lanterns and workman's tools. Wandering alone in the tunnels of Crelezara and Targhazarn can be dangerous, so each is clad in chain mail and helmet and armed with a short sword, a hand axe, a light crossbow, and 12 quarrels.

A track repair crew arrives within 1-6 hours of any particular accident. Their travel speed by railcart is 6 MPH.

"Fettlers" (5-8 normal dwarves): AC 5; hp 6 each. See "Rolling Stock" for complete statistics.

"Ganger" (boss): AL LG; AC 5; MV 6; F2; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; see "Rolling Stock" for complete statistics.

Six track repair crews work on the TMC system.

Locomotive Mishap Table

Roll 1d12 for every 10 miles traveled.

Underdark wildlife generally leaves the trains alone, since most creatures are scared of the noise and speed. However, some creatures have grown used to the engines and attempt various forms of mischief. Most problems along the way are technical problems rather than deadly assaults. The dwarves can solve most technical glitches after a short delay.

1-5. **No encounter**

6. **Rocks on the Tracks.** A track repair crew of six dwarves flags down the train with a blue lantern. They are removing debris that has fallen onto the track from the tunnel ceiling, resulting in a delay of 1-10 turns before the train can start again.

7. **Derailment.** Debris missed by track crews derails a randomly determined part of the train. All on board take 1-4 hp damage, unless a saving throw vs. paralyzation is made. Restoring the derailed vehicle to the track causes a delay of 1-10 turns. If the engine itself is derailed, the delay lasts a full 10 turns.

8. **Trouble With the Fire.** Poor fuel or improper stoking delays the trip by 1-2 turns because the locomotive's fire is not burning properly.

9. **Coupling Break.** With a sudden lurch, one of the train's couplings breaks and part of the train is left behind. Innart quickly brakes his end of the train, and the locomotive backs up to retrieve the errant cars. The train starts again 1-6 turns later.

10. **Sight Glass.** One of the external boiler fixtures shatters with an alarming crack. A sudden pall of steam rushes from the boiler and shuts off immediately. The driver brings the engine to a halt. The sight glass has broken, which means a delay of six turns while Vosh and Zurkel replace it. (A sight glass is a cylindrical glass gauge that displays the water level in the boiler).

11. **Hot Box.** Clouds of smoke pour out from any axle on the train (DM's choice). The oil lubrication on that axle has malfunctioned, requiring two or three hours of repairs while a new bearing is fitted.

12. **Special.** Hostile creatures have crept into the tunnels. To the dwarves, these encounters are the exception rather than the norm, but they are still equipped to deal with them. Roll 1d6 to determine the exact encounter.

1. **Jermlaine Attack.** With a few carefully placed bits of rock and other debris, this vile tribe seeks to derail the train (75% chance of success). If their plan works, the jermlaine wait until the guards go to help fix the problem, then swarm aboard. They rip open the truck tarpaulins, raid the money bags, and then flee in 1-4 rounds, escaping with 100-600 gp. Because of the confusion of the derailment and the jermlaine's stealthiness, there is only a 25% chance per round of noticing their attack.

If forced to fight, the jermlaine attack with darts, miniature pikes, and saps (cumulative 2% chance per blow of knocking victim unconscious). Jermlaine would rather flee than fight. A jermlaine elder directs their operations.

Jermlaine (47): INT average (genius cunning); AL NE; AC 7; MV 15; HD ½; hp 3 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA opponents suffer a −5 penalty to surprise rolls; SD can detect *invisible* creatures 50% of the time, are 75% undetectable, save as 4-HD monsters, escape all damage from attacks that normally do half damage if saving throw is successful; SZ T; ML 12; XP 15; MM/176-177.

Jermlaine elder: hp 4; SA drain magical items handled for 1-4 rounds; XP 65; all other statistics as above.

2. **Spiders.** These giant spiders have built their webs across this section of the tunnel, hoping to snare tasty creatures of the Underdark. The train will burn its way through the webs, bringing the angry arachnids down onto the train.

Giant spiders (5): INT low; AL CE; AC 4; MV 3, web 12; HD 4+4; hp 25, 22, 20, 19, 16; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA poison (type F); SZ L; ML 13; XP 650; MM/326-327.

3. **Rust monster.** Rust monsters are very rare in the tunnels of Crelezara, because the dwarves trap and kill them

whenever possible. These creatures wreak havoc on railway tracks and equipment, and the dwarves hate them with an intense passion. The government offers a 1,000-gp bounty for each rust monster tail.

Despite hunting parties and poisoned bait (chemically treated scrap metal), the occasional rust monster still slips through to try to devour the acres of delicious metal waiting for it. This particular rust monster has been devouring the track in this section of the tunnel. There is a 50% chance that it has eaten the line on the other side of the tunnel rather than the line that the PCs' train is traveling on.

If so, Innart brings the train to a halt and sends half the guards and the party back to slay the monster. Once it is dead, the dwarves claim the monster's tail and set up hazard lanterns around the destroyed track before getting back on board. The train can now continue.

If the rust monster is on the same track as the train, it is sitting on the rails in the path of the locomotive. The creature must make a saving throw vs. paralyzation or be hypnotized by the engine lights. If it succeeds, the monster jumps clear, but if it fails, it is run over and killed, derailing the engine in the process. The front wheels may be rusted completely through as a result of this accident (80% chance).

If the rust monster jumps clear, the train will derail anyway because the creature has eaten through the rails. Roll for surprise. If the monster has the advantage, it attacks the train, going for the locomotive first and starting at the wheels. If they can, the dwarves will sacrifice their arms and armor to distract the monster. If only the rails are damaged in the trains' path, there will be a 24-hour delay while a track repair crew fixes the line. If the locomotive is damaged by the rust monster, the engine is beyond immediate repair and a replacement locomotive must be sent for. On top of the rail repairs, waiting for the new engine to arrive will cause a further delay. Assume that it is coming from the nearest town for the purpose of working out its arrival time.

Rust monster: INT animal; AL N; AC 2; MV 18; HD 5; hp 25; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg nil; SA rust metal (magical items have 10% chance per plus to be unaffected); SZ M; ML 9; XP 270; MM/305.

4. **Tunnel worm.** This subterranean horror has crept up from some forgotten digging in search of prey. It strikes suddenly from the darkness, attempting to pull someone off the train to be mauled to death on the ground.

Tunnel worm: INT non; AL N; AC 4; MV 6; HD 9+3; hp 53; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SA chew through armor, lunge with +2 bonus to attack roll; SZ G; ML 12; XP 1,400; MM/42 (Centipede).

5. **Will o'wisp.** This creature masquerades as an approaching train far off down the tunnel. It attacks when it appears to be about to pass, jumping indiscriminately from truck to truck.

Will o'wisp: INT exceptional; AL CE; AC −8; MV fly 18 (A): HD 9; hp 54; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 2-16; SD immune to spells except *protection from evil, magic missile,* and *maze;* MR special; SZ S; ML 17; XP 3,000; MM/361.

6: **Giant slug.** This monster suddenly looms up in the tunnel, looking vast and monstrous in the glare of the oil lamps. The train slams into it but sustains no damage from the slug's resilient body. The giant slug, due to its size and immunity to blunt weapons, takes no damage from the impact, but the hot front of the locomotive causes 2d4 hp damage. The slug suffers the same damage again every round that it remains in contact with the engine. Trains colliding with a giant slug have a 40% chance of derailing.

Giant slug: INT non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 12; hp 72; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 1-12; SA spit acid for 4d8 hp damage; SD immune to blunt weapons; SZ G (40' long); ML 12; XP 5,000; MM/319.

The Valley of the White Peaks

The journey is noisy and exhilarating, as the train roars through the tunnel past underground rivers, pools, and caves. The tunnel is filled with the harsh panting sound of the locomotive and lit by an eerie glow from the train's lanterns and the glare of the firebox door in the cab.

After a long trip in the dark, the PCs notice a light slowly growing brighter at the end of the tunnel. The train is approaching the Valley of the White Peaks and the town of Carmazoz.

When the train charges out into the open air, the PCs may realize that they have passed right through Mount Crelezara and are heading toward Mount Targhazarn. The town of Carmazoz is about two miles distant.

The rail line never runs in the open air except in the Valley of the White Peaks. This valley is in the heart of dwarven country and is enclosed by precipitous mountains on all sides. To climb these mountains from the outside world would be extremely foolhardy; avalanches and other hazards await those who attempt to ascend their heights. Since nobody from the outside is aware of anything particularly interesting in this mountain range, no one has ever bothered to risk their lives to reach the valley. The secret of the railway stays hidden.

> Traveling through the Valley of the White Peaks, you are able to take in the spectacular view of the mountains as they rear up into snow capped heights. The train has been climbing a steady grade all this time and is now some 2,000' higher than Crelezara city. The air is cold and the rails hum as the train rattles along.
>
> The tunnel mouths that open onto this outdoor stretch are very impressive edifices carved in stone and decorated with bas reliefs. The overall effect is marred by the long wooden sheds that extend from the tunnel mouths over the railway line. The sheds were built to protect the entrances from avalanches that occasionally threaten the line.

Carmazoz Town

> The railway runs right through the middle of Carmazoz Town. Carmazoz is a plain and serviceable place,

built mainly of stone. The many industries based here fill the air with the clamor of smithies and smelting works.

Depending on the time of day, the party's train may stay here overnight. If it is still evening, the party will be booked into the "Laughing Vulture" inn for the night, while the train is guarded by a relief squad of soldiers. The following morning, Sergeant Ragin and his lads are back on duty, ready to set off for Celosdra.

If the journey has been fairly free of disasters and the train is making good time, the party may just want to stop for a quick meal and then press on. If the players are role-playing their parts as investigators properly however, Carmazoz Town is a good place to pick up information pertaining to the case.

The Laughing Vulture Inn

All rumors and tall tales originate at the Laughing Vulture, the inn where the party will either be staying or passing through. It is a homely place frequented by a principally male clientele of soldiers, miners, laborers, and railway workers. The tap room is a rowdy and ribald place, not a good atmosphere for those with sensitive dispositions.

The party of foreigners causes some surprise and suspicion at first, since the PCs are the first "big folk" that Carmazoz town has ever seen. Vosh, Zurkel, or one of the other dwarves from the train can smooth things over, or the PCs can ease tensions by buying a few rounds of drinks for everyone. Once the Laughing Vulture patrons have relaxed, they are only too happy to fill the PCs in with their gossip, theories, and rumors of the train robberies.

The DM must create the inn patrons. At least 1d12+11 dwarven patrons are present in the bar, and each dwarf knows 1-4 rumors or stories and believes them to be true. Roll 1d8 on the rumors table (page 67) for each item, rerolling repeats. The DM may embellish the rumors as much as desired—the important thing is to misdirect the PCs so they jump at every shadow when they set off.

The barkeeper is a jovial old soul named **Surt** (AC 10; hp 5; Dmg 1-6 with club). He is glad for the additional business the PCs provide and will relate 1-2 rumors to any PC who asks.

When the PCs and their train leave Carmazoz for Celosdra, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> A small crowd of dwarves has gathered on the platform to watch you leave. Looking at their grim faces, you are not sure whether they have come to say "good luck" or "goodbye forever." Their expressions hardly change as the engine starts chugging.
>
> Slowly the train pulls out of the station, heading out into snow-bound country. The air is crisp and clean, which brings a brief lift to your spirits until you see the gaping mouth of the tunnel ahead of you. Once more you are plunged into darkness.

The Tunnel

The dwarves on the train tell the party that the 10-mile stretch after the first water stop from Carmazoz Town is the mysterious section of line. The unfortunate track repair crew met their grisly end here, and the two trains disappeared without trace on this stretch. The party has been warned; it is up to them to take precautions.

The actual trap is located exactly halfway between the two water stops, on the eastern side of the tunnel. The trap is fully prepared, and the derro and duergar are ready to receive their "guests." Regandt has been scrying with his *crystal ball*, so he knows that the train is due at any time.

The PCs are free to try any tactics they like. Innart does not stop them, because he is afraid of what lies ahead. If the party merely drives the train down the tunnel without taking any precautions, read the following boxed text to the players:

> You and the guards keep an eye out for trouble ahead. As your lanterns scour the darkness, the dwarven soldiers nervously finger their crossbows and double check to see if they are properly loaded.
>
> Then up ahead, without any warning at all, you see the engine suddenly veer to the right and into the tunnel wall! You brace yourselves for a crash, but nothing happens. To your amazement the entire train glides through the tunnel wall as if it wasn't there! Darkness descends all around you as you pass through the wall, and the startled yells of the dwarves echo in your ears. You hear a sickening crash from up ahead, and the train lurches violently to a halt.

The PCs' train has been diverted into the trap through Montalaina's *illusionary wall*. See areas 1 and 2 below for full details.

The Derro and Duergar Lair

1. Alcove. This whole chamber is concealed by an *illusionary wall* spell cast by Montalaina; the main tunnel appears continuous. A *phantasmal force* spell has altered the diverted track so that it resembles the normal railway line.

The alcove itself is featureless except for a block and tackle and a large winch bolted to the eastern wall. This device pulls the outside track into the alcove, where it is bolted onto the rails leading to the trap-siding.

Seven duergar are stationed here, armed with mallets, pliers, wrenches, and rail spikes. They wait for the train to pass through, then unbolt the track and return it to normal. This takes 2-4 turns.

Duergar (7): INT average; AL LE (N); AC 4; MV 6; HD 1+2; hp 8 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA stealth, *invisibility*, enlargement; SD surprised only on 1; save vs. magical attacks with +4 bonus; immune to paralysis, illusion/phantasm spells, poison; SZ S; ML 13; XP 420; MM/96-97; chain mail, shield, pick, spear.

2. Trap-siding Cavern. This cavern is quite tall, with a peaked ceiling reaching 70'. The siding, with its surrounding embankment, runs the full length of this area. The embankment itself made of rubble and dirt heaped 10' high. The skeletal remains of many dwarves are embedded in this pile, the hideous leavings of the cannibalistic derro.

If the PCs' train was caught in the trap, the driver, fireman, and guard desperately apply the brakes, but they can't prevent the train from careering down the siding and into the rubble embankment at the end. Each PC has half a round to do something. Anyone who wants to take action must roll initiative at a −4 penalty because of darkness. Successful PCs can elect to pursue any course of action they like, but the DM should not tell them they have only half a round to do it in. Spells are spoiled by the rude jolt of the crash,

Laughing Vulture Rumors

1. "They do say that the Knockers are angry with us and our steam rail. If you hears the Knockers, 'tis a sure sign you'll soon be dead." (This is partly true. Over the past year, some track repair crews did hear a mysterious ghostly tapping down the stretch of line where the trains later disappeared. An entire repair crew was also found murdered near there as well; they were victims who saw more of the derro and duergar than was good for them.)

2. "The tunnels be haunted by those poor souls that died in its construction. The spirits have carried the trains over to the other side to join the Netherworld Express." (This is complete rubbish, although the mines could very well be haunted).

3. "Old Ned the Stationmaster used to see a strange lady in red over in the shunting yard. He said she were a beautiful dwarven maiden and that she were interested in trains. We never took much notice, seeing how fond he was of ale. Would that we had taken more notice. We found him ripped to pieces behind one of the sheds last week."

(This story is true, as far as it goes. Using her *polymorph self* spell, Montalaina used to visit Old Ned and pumped him for information. Usually Ned was only too glad to tell her anything, as his constant tippling made him extremely garrulous. Shortly after the first hijacking, Ned began to get a bit suspicious and so Montalaina resorted to her *charm* ability. Last week, Ned resisted the spell twice and refused to divulge any information. In a fit of lamia rage, Montalaina tore him limb from limb and returned to her lair with the sulks.)

4. "These disappearances are masterminded by the government, which is trying to cover up its extravagances with the taxpayers' money." (False. This rumor is taken seriously only by some of the younger, more rebellious dwarves.)

5. "A time elemental has set up a vortex in the tunnel and is sucking trains back to a time before steam power was invented." (False, but an interesting concept.)

6. "If you see the Red Lady, you are sure to die." (The story of Ned's demise has been circulated freely among the people of Carmazoz. The "Red Lady" is seen as some kind of mysterious siren that lures male dwarves to their deaths).

7. "Some evil wizard is destroying our trains with one of those black *spheres of annihilation*. That's the only possible explanation so far as I can see." (False)

8. "There were a series of murders down that stretch of line. There's always been something funny about that tunnel. A whole track repair crew were found hacked to pieces down there once. They never found who did it. That line is always unnaturally cold, now." (This story ties in with rumor No 1. It is true but slightly embellished. It is no more cold there than anywhere else along the underground railway.)

Hints on Play

The trap-ambush (area 2 of "The Derro and Duergar Lair") is a fairly large scale conflict for normal AD&D game rules to resolve. Few DMs, and still fewer players, will want to roll dozens of attack and damage rolls for all the NPCs. The following suggestions may help the DM organize this battle to speed its resolution.

Lead figures or counters and a map of the train are recommended for the ambush. In 25 mm scale, the train is too long for most tables, but the train and surrounding embankment can easily be divided into three sections side by side.

BATTLESYSTEM™ Skirmishes: These rules are perfectly adapted for this kind of battle and will greatly speed the course of play. The troops can be adapted with little effort.

BATTLESYSTEM™ game: Play the battle as if it were an ordinary BATTLESYSTEM scenario, but with the following adjustments. All distances are measured using the normal AD&D rules instead of BATTLESYSTEM rules, and each figure represents one creature instead of 10. Each BATTLESYSTEM turn now represents one melee round.

SPELLJAMMER™ setting: The battle can be converted to a more manageable size using the rules for "Rapid Resolution of Small-Scale Combat" detailed on page 67 of the *Concordance of Arcane Space.*

If the DM has no access to any of these systems, the battle can be simplified in the manner described by Ted James Thomas Zuvich in his adventure "The Siege of Kratys Freehold" (DUNGEON® Adventures #33). In this system, all troops are divided by five and treated as individuals for the purposes of combat. In this scenario, four dwarven soldiers defend the train against nine derro warriors and four duergar warriors (averaging out the sergeants' and lieutenants' statistics into one figure). Damage taken by each unit of five is assumed to apply to each individual of that unit.

Whatever system is used to resolve this conflict, the PCs and any NPCs that they engage should conduct separate normal AD&D game combat.

Psionics: If the DM's campaign uses psionics, it's a good idea to work out the duergars' psionic abilities before play. If the PC party is unusually strong, psionics are a good way of evening the odds, but using these rules will slow down the resolution of the battle even further.

so the only actions likely to be successful are drawing weapons or jumping off the train. Jumping off the train in the dark causes 1-6 hp abrasion damage unless the PC is wearing plate mail or better armor. Anyone who jumps falls prone and must get up the following round. PCs who lose initiative can't do anything before the crash.

Everyone on board the train take 1d12 hp damage from impact (save vs. paralyzation for half damage). A Dexterity check is required to avoid being knocked prone (and spending the next round getting up again). Rolling checks for all the dwarven NPCs is a lengthy process, so the DM can assume that they have all been knocked down.

The combined forces of the Pale Reivers and the Red-Handed Slayers (see pages 56-57) are assembled at the siding, waiting to do battle. Montalaina and the Reivers wait on the northern side of the embankment, and the Slayers stand opposite on the southern side.

Once the train has crashed, derro and duergar crossbowmen open fire on any exposed targets. Montalaina casts a *sleep* spell on any resisting dwarven soldiers and crew before she and Regandt turn their attention to the party.

The crossbowmen try to kill or wound as many of the dwarves as possible before charging down to finish them off with cold steel. Dwarves who fail morale checks at this stage surrender. They are thrown down, bound and gagged, and left where they lie to be dealt with later.

The PCs and the dwarven soldiers can use the train itself as cover. The engine cab provides a cover bonus of −3, and the partially enclosed truck footplates provide a bonus of −2. The carriages provide −4 cover, −10 if the shutters are closed. If attempts to storm the carriages fail, the villains may set the rail cars on fire.

If the battle turns against the villains, they will retreat to their respective lairs and try to hold the party there. All alliances are off; the derro and duergar must fend for themselves.

3. Train Dump. The derro and duergar store all the engines and rolling stock of the past two robberies in this side cavern. Much of it has been dismantled and piled here in great untidy heaps. One engine is reasonably intact, as Regandt has been studying it with a view to discovering its workings.

The scrap here is all rather rusty and battered, and none of it has any monetary value to the PCs. If they need a battering ram to break into either the derro or duergar lair, an axle from the scrap heap would serve very well.

4. Doors to Derro Complex. Each of these iron doors is set into a rough-hewn stone doorway. Each door is 5' high by 3' wide and has a peephole approximately 3½' from the ground that can be shuttered from the inside. In times of emergency, these doors can be locked and barred from the inside.

All the rooms and corridors in the derro lair are crude and rough, hacked out by the derro warriors themselves. The interior doors are made of reinforced wood and can be locked and barred from within each room. Each door has an arrowslit that can be shuttered from the inside. Interior doors are the same size as the entrance doors. Ceiling height is generally 6' and rises as high as 7'.

5. Guard Room. During the hours between train-nappings, 10 warriors stand guard here, one watching through the door to the corridor from area 4. They keep five jars of chalk dust at hand to catch invisible intruders. Smelly bedrolls, a brazier, and a smoky atmosphere are the only furnishings.

6. Derro Armory and Smithy. The southern end of this room holds a large forge with bellows, an anvil, and other implements of the smith's craft. Weapons and armor of both derro and dwarven manufacture clutter the rest of the room, including 20 short swords, 13 suits of dwarven-sized chain mail, 12 helmets, and eight crossbows, all of which are TMC equipment. The derro armaments include eight suits of derro-sized leather armor, three spiked bucklers, 13 spears, six hook fauchards, and 18 daggers. None of this gear is magical.

7. Main Living Area. Eight female derro camp followers can be found here, trying to bring order out of chaos from the remains of the last derro meal. They fight only in defense of their lives.

Derro females (8): INT very to genius; AL CE; AC 8; MV 9; HD 1; hp 6 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ S; ML 7; XP 35; MM/96-97; kitchen knife.

Soiled and smelly bedrolls and untidy bundles of clothing are scattered around the large central fire pit. If the PCs investigate, the fire pit reveals gruesome evidence of the derro's cannibalistic tendencies. Many cracked dwarven bones blackened by the fire are littered under the ashes. The air is foul with the smell of cooked meat. Smoke escapes the room through a crack in the ceiling.

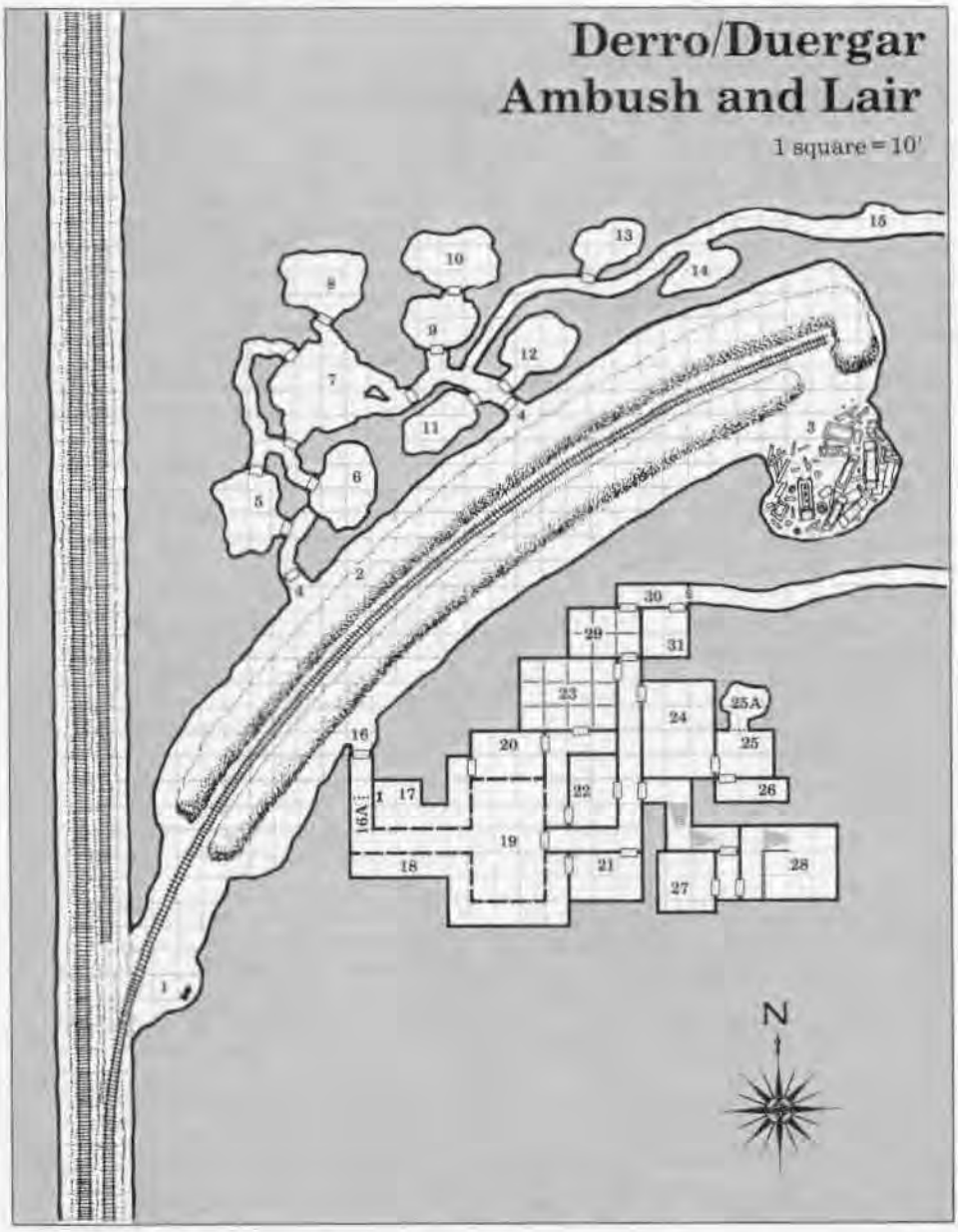
8. Montalaina's Lair. Montalaina's room is a testimony to her excessive pride and vanity. Six mirrors are hung about the room so that the lamia can stand in the center and see herself from all angles. The rough stone chamber has been softened by burgundy velvet drapes suspended from the ceiling and a large four poster bed against the northern wall. A large, beautifully carved wooden chest sits at the foot of the bed. A matching set of eight goblets and a pitcher, all cast in gold, rests atop the chest.

The chest is worth 100 gp and contains 9,000 sp, 2,300 gp, 100 pp, and three gems worth 150 gp each in a small leather bag. The goblets and pitcher are worth 6,000 gp total. The velvet curtains about the room are worth 100 gp.

Four of the mirrors are worth 30 gp each and the fifth is worth 400 gp because it is made of exceptionally fine-quality glass held in an intricately carved oak frame. The sixth mirror is worth 1,100 gp. This mirror is 6' high by 4' wide and trimmed with gold. If the PCs try to carry this through the winding derro corridors, they will have to make a Dexterity check for each corner that they negotiate. Failure indicates that they have dropped or banged the mirror, which requires a saving throw (glass vs. fall). Two people are required to carry the mirror.

Montalaina originally "persuaded" three of the more dexterous derro to manoeuvre the mirror into her lair and stood behind them every step of the way, telling them what she would do to them if they dared to drop it.

Resting on a small table next to the bed is a small gold-framed portrait of Montalaina's son, worth 130 gp. He is a boy of about five years and looks pleasant enough. The crest on his medallion may enable the party to contact his family and collect the 2,000 gp bounty on Montalaina's head (assuming the PCs can catch her or kill her, that is). See pages 56-57 for more about Montalaina's history.



A broom that radiates magic has been tossed under the bed. It is actually a *broom of animated attack.*

The two *charmed* ogres stationed here attack anyone who enters. These are Montalaina's bodyguards and servants. The ogres' faces are somewhat bruised because Montalaina tends to hit them during her frequent tantrums.

Ogre bodyguards (2): INT low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4 + 1; hp 28, 25; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10 + 2; SZ L; ML 12; XP 270; MM/272.

Montalaina's spell book is hidden under the mattress of her bed. The book contains all the spells listed under Montalaina's statistics plus *gaze reflection, identify, shocking grasp; Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter; sepia snake sigil.* The *sepia snake sigil* spell is cast on the book as well.

9. Student Savant Quarters. This filthy room belongs to Sezendril and Grafith (see page 56 for statistics). Bits of parchment are scattered all over the room. Though various parts of spells have been scribbled down on the papers, none are complete and all are useless to

the party. Hidden under the rubbish are the two students' treasure boxes. Each is locked with an ordinary lock and is *wizard locked* (6th level for Sezendril, 4th level for Grafith). Inside Sezendril's box are 18 pp, 10 gp, and a slim spell book containing the spells listed in his statistics, plus *ventriloquism* and *wizard lock*. Grafith's box contains 17 pp, 6 gp, and his spell book. This contains the spells listed under Grafith's statistics plus *irritation* and *wizard lock*.

10. Regandt's Room. Regandt is just as filthy in his habits as the rest of his tribe, but he is more productive. Many charts and drawings of the inner workings of the steam engines are scattered about the room, together with rugs and expensive but soiled clothes looted from the trains. Against the northern wall is Regandt's bed, a crude wooden box filled with cushions taken from railway carriages. A pile of tangled blankets spills onto the floor.

A pile of 30 dusty books rests against the eastern wall. Ten of them are engineering texts, Regandt's special field of interest. The rest are on a variety of subjects: three on mathematics, one on physics, one on the language of the lesser spotted grung of the Zapatai jungles, two on metaphysics, two on cartography, two on mycology, four on geology, and five on architecture. The books have all been printed with a printing press and include crude woodcut illustrations. The spines all bear the name of the same human publisher: Rondar House. Each book is worth 50 gp.

Against the southern wall, under a dirty blanket, are nine unmarked stone bottles, a mortar and pestle, and three jars of fungi. Anyone succeeding in a herbalism proficiency check can determine that the fungi are all poisonous. The bottles contain various poisons that Regandt is stockpiling for the day when he decides to rid himself of Orgmund and his cohorts. Three bottles contain poison type G, four contain poison type H, one contains poison type I, and the last contains poison type J (see page 73 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

The bed is propped up with bricks, and Regandt's *wizard locked* (8th level) treasure chest is hidden underneath it. Regandt is storing all the loot that the Pale Reivers have taken so far in this chest, though he has set aside a few choice items for himself. These items are in a small leather sack within the chest, and include four black opals worth 1,000 gp each, two 500-gp topazes, a 150-gp chunk of amber, 30 pp, and 26 gp. The chest also contains 4,750 gp and a total of 23 gems worth 500 gp (five red garnets), 100 gp (five green chrysobels), 50 gp (10 bloodstones), and 50 gp (three clear rock crystals).

Hidden at the bottom of the chest lie Regandt's *crystal ball* and his spell book, which contains all the spells listed under his statistics plus the following: *affect normal fires, light, spider climb, ventriloquism; ESP, hypnotic pattern, wizard lock; minor creation; repulsion.*

11. Torture Chamber. Whips, chains, and manacles hang from the walls and ceiling of this room. A large rack dominates the center of the room, with a bedroll spread out on it. The smokey light of three braziers illuminates a variety of torturer's instruments that have been placed in the coals to heat. This room and its implements show signs of recent use.

Captain Grandel (see page 56) uses this room as his sleeping quarters, bedding down on the rack at night. Under the rack is his locked money box, which contains two aquamarines worth 100 gp, a 50-gp chunk of jasper, 25 pp, and 15 gp.

12. Dungeon. In this filthy, stinking room, 38 TMC dwarves (29 of whom are female) are held prisoner. They are all dirty and underfed, and have been regularly beaten. The derro have used them to dismantle the stolen trains and perform other manual labor. The prisoners were all either passengers, workmen, or soldiers on the two hijacked trains.

Dwarven prisoners (38): AL LG; AC 10; MV 6; HD 1; hp 3 or 2 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 10. If healed, these dwarves gain 5 hp each.

13. Parlor. Much of the stolen foodstuffs and other perishables has been stored here. Most of it is rather stale, but three barrels of red wine are still potable.

14. Midden. All of the derro's refuse is tossed in here, and the area is fast filling up. A downdraft from holes in the cave ceiling blows the smell down the passage.

15. Escape Tunnel. This passage leads 500 yards east and joins up with the duergar tunnel (see area 30) before continuing into the Underdark.

16. Door to the Duergar Complex. This door is identical in construction and dimensions to the doors to the derro lair (area 4). A red fist and dagger device has been painted onto it.

The disciplined duergar have made a better job of their lair, despite its temporary nature. All rooms and passages are neatly squared off, and the place is generally clean and tidy. The ceiling height throughout the lair is 10', to allow for *enlarged* duergar and Orgmund's desire for grandeur. The doors are the same style and size as those in the derro lair and also include shuttered arrowslits.

16A. Portcullis. Beyond the door is a portcullis controlled by a winch in area 17.

17. Shooting Gallery. The winch here controls the portcullis in area 16A. A small peephole just above the winch looks out into the passage. Arrowslits are built into the southern section of the wall to deal with any intruders that may get past the portcullis. All arrowslits in the duergar complex can be shuttered from the inside.

18. Shooting Gallery. This gallery resembles area 17, with arrowslits designed to discomfort invaders.

19. Entrance Hall. The walls of this ominous place are pierced with many arrowslits that create an uncomfortable sensation of being watched. The iron door set into the eastern wall is barred from the inside and requires a bend bars/lift gates roll to open.

20. Guards' Quarters. When no trainnapping is in progress, five warriors are stationed here. Five duergar-sized beds are arranged along the walls, and a table and five stools are set up in the middle. A short bow and a quiver of 24 arrows rest on each bed. The duergar are expert bowmen and fire on invaders.

21. Armory. The duergar keep all their spare weapons and armor here, both their own and those of dwarven manufacture. The weapons neatly stored in racks include: 17 spears, 12 iron bucklers, four military picks, six short swords, and 11 war hammers. Two suits of black duergar plate mail, six

suits of dwarven mail, and seven TMC helmets are kept on stands. Three light crossbows and two cases of 12 bolts are stacked neatly by the door.

22. Smithy. This forge resembles the derro smithy but is much more orderly. A forge, an anvil, a large tub of dirty water, and all the usual tools (hammers, pliers, vises, mail-making equipment, etc.) are kept in good shape. Four 5′ lengths of iron rail are stacked against the south wall.

Tharga, the duergar smith, can be found here 20 hours a day, working metal, sketching new designs, tempering work, cutting tin, and repairing tools. In times of emergency, she rallies the duergar women into martial order. Tharga dons one of the duergar suits of plate mail and takes a buckler from area 20. In combat she wields a war hammer. She is a grim old dame who keeps most of the Slayers in terror of her ire.

Tharga (duergar): INT average; AL LE (N); AC 10 or 2; MV 6; HD 5; hp 26; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type +1 (Strength 17); SA and SD as per male duergar; SZ S; ML 16; XP 1,400; MM/96-97; pouch containing 20 gp and a wrought silver brooch worth 100 gp.

23. Common Room. All the lowest-ranking duergar warriors and the females live here. Curtains and blankets divide the room into 10′ squares. The hanging are stretched across lengths of cord strung at a height of 5′, so tall PCs can look into the whole area. Each 10′ square area has three duergar beds, spare blankets, and assorted clothing in a wooden chest.

24. Dining Hall. Long, low tables and benches are arranged around the hall's central fire pit. The raised dais holds a table reserved for Orgmund, his current consort, and his lieutenants. Two crossed spears and several shields decorated with the Red-Handed Slayers device hang above his table. Ten female duergar are preparing for the expected victory feast. Unless they are led by Tharga, they do not oppose the party except in self defence.

Duergar women (8): AC 10; HD 1; hp 4 each; THAC0 19; ML 9; XP 270; kitchen knives; see Tharga, area 22, for complete statistics.

25. Kitchen. Eight duergar women and five children are working here, preparing a meal for the hungry warriors returning from battle. Most of the foodstuffs being prepared on the kitchen table were looted from the trains; the rest are edible fungi that the duergar grow themselves. All the cupboards in this room are filled with chipped clay crockery and jars of various teas and spices likely to appeal only to duergar.

The duergar women's statistics are identical to those in area 24 above. The children are noncombatants.

25A. "Dungheap's" Lair. Behind the metal grill of this door is the duergars' garbage disposal unit: an otyugh. All the waste of the complex is thrown in here to feed this ugly monster, whom the duergar have affectionately named "Dungheap." In times of danger, the duergar release the monster, which is fairly well disposed to gray dwarves but liable to eat anyone else.

Otyugh: INT low; AL N; AC 3; MV 6; HD 7; hp 47; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1-8/1-8/2-5; SA grab, disease; SD never surprised; SZ L; ML 14; XP 975; MM/283.

26. Parlor. The food stolen from TMC is stored here. Shelves are packed with bottled wines, hams, cheeses, dried fruits, salted beef, and other such provisions. On the floor beneath the bottom shelf, the duergar grow their fungi in low clay trays.

27. Torture Chamber. Orgmund uses this room's equipment to extract details of the railway operations from prisoners. All items show signs of recent use, and there is an unpleasant burnt smell in the air. As in the derro torture chamber, a large rack dominates the center of this room, and numerous chains and manacles hang from the ceiling.

A large cauldron of tepid oil hangs over the remains of a fire. A table and several chairs are spread in a circle around the rack—Orgmund likes an audience while he works. A ledger on the table contains transcripts of "interviews" with prisoners. It is written in dwarvish, the language in which Orgmund received the clearest answers. Not all TMC dwarves speak the Underdark trade tongue, and even fewer of them understand the duergar dialect. The ledger doesn't contain much of interest to the PCs, except testimony to the cruelty of the duergar.

28. Slave Pit. The door opens onto a 10′ × 30′ landing. Stairs lead down to the slave area 10′ below.

Fourteen male dwarves taken from the two missing trains languish in this prison. When they aren't being forced to do backbreaking manual labor for the duergar, they are chained to the walls and are clad only in ragged loincloths. All have been tortured and would dearly like a chance to fight the duergar.

Dwarven slaves (14): HD 1 + 1; hp 6 each; ML 13; see are 12 for complete statistics.

29. Officers' Quarters. This room is divided up into six areas by curtains (see area 23). Captain Ord (see page 57) lives in the northwestern section, and the duergar lieutenants and sergeants occupy the remaining cubicles. Each section contains uninteresting personal effects such as clothing and spare boots. Ord, however, keeps his small locked treasure chest here, under a pile of old blankets. It contains a gem worth 100 gp, 28 gp, and two jars of kohl face paint.

30. Passage. This passage leads to Orgmund's room (area 31). The secret door leads to an escape tunnel that joins up with the derro tunnel (area 15) before continuing on to an underground river that is the water supply for the complex. The duergar and derro send their slaves to fetch buckets of water twice each day.

31. Orgmund's Room. This room has obviously been designed to impress. The canopied bed against the southern wall is hung with black velvet drapes (worth 100 gp), and the walls have been painted a contrasting shade of red. Five Slayer shields and three battle axes are hung on the walls, and several patterned rugs decorate the floor (they are worth 200 gp, 150 gp, and 100 gp). The stand for Orgmund's armor and weapons is in the northwest corner, with a cleaning kit resting beside it.

The western wall is hung with a large tapestry of dwarven craftsmanship that depicts soaring dragons hovering over the mountains of Crelezara and Targhazarn. It is worth 500 gp. Two locked chests sit on either side of the bed. The eastern chest contains Orgmund's clothing, rich dwarven attire in many styles and colors. Orgmund wears these garments only within the complex, as they are much too bright to wear in the field. The western chest contains Orgmund's personal treasure and the assembled loot of the Slayers.

Orgmund's treasure chest contains his coins and a locked wooden box, both trapped with poison needles. The poison is type O (see *DMG*, page 73) as Orgmund likes to torment those that would steal from him. The chest contains 4,000 gp and 14 zircons (500 gp total). The locked box is filled with 770 gp and three red garnets (500 gp each).

The End of the Line

Once the PCs have defeated or chased off the villains in this adventure, they can travel on to Celosdra with the long-overdue supplies. The emotional scene that ensues as rescued dwarves are greeted by their friends and relatives is touching, but not all is bliss, After all, quite a few dwarves did not make it back alive from the ordeal.

If the party hasn't made too big a mess of things, the heroes will be lionized by the normally dour mountain dwarves. They can travel back with all the loot that they have gleaned and collect their reward from Vorgen Slurdaz.

The villains, if any are left, flee deep into the Underdark, taking what they can. Each side blames the other for the operation's failure, and none of them are keen to return. This is not to say that TMC will not be troubled by either group in the future, however. In any event, the TMC board of directors gives orders to collapse the tunnel leading to the Underdark and charge tourists 1 gp per head to visit the "Dungeons of Terror."

Some DMs may feel that the masses of treasure in this adventure are too much. Practically all of the coins taken by the villains are minted by TMC and can therefore be reclaimed by them. After all, the PCs did agree to complete the mission for a set wage, didn't they? If the adventurers balk at this, the DM can point out the pale, pinched faces of the undernourished dwarven children of Celosdra.

The DM may give story-award experience points to PCs who successfully resolve TMC's problem. Success can range from defeating or slaying every one of the villains to making them an offer they can't refuse ("Leave this area forever, or die."). Bear in mind that negotiating a settlement with Regandt, Orgmund, or Montalaina is an extremely tricky business, as all three are exceptionally proud and very treacherous in a tight spot. Successful (and beneficial to TMC) negotiations should be rewarded.

The group story award should not exceed 71,400 XP (the total XP value of all the monsters in the derro/duergar lair) and should be modified for each PC. Divided up, the story award should not exceed one-tenth of the experience points a PC needs to go up a level (see page 47 of the *DMG*).

If the DM wishes, quite a few other adventures can be set in and around the TMC railway. Branch lines spread in many directions. Who knows what lies at the ends of them? Long-abandoned spurs might lead to "The Ship of Night" (issue #20) or to the caverns of "Thiondar's Legacy" (issue #30). The PCs and dwarves may have to repel an invasion by drow, kuo-toa, or xorn. Anything is possible. The rails go ever on and on. Ω